

SPECIAL BOOKS ISSUE

DECEMBER 2009

The American Conservative

David Bromwich
Septimus Waugh
George Scialabba
Daniel McCarthy
Nick Gillespie
Daniel Hannan
Jacob Heilbrunn
Florence King
Norman Stone
Michael Lind
Chase Madar
Andrew McKie
Alexander Waugh
Albert Jay Nock
Justin Raimondo
Sam Tanenhaus
Taki Theodoracopulos
Chilton Williamson Jr.
Peregrine Worsthorne
Helen Rittelmeyer
John R. MacArthur
Alan Pell Crawford
Alfred S. Regnery

Sam Leith
R.J. Stove
Stuart Reid
Eve Tushnet
Peter W. Wood
Scott McConnell
Bill Kauffman
Jeffrey Hart
John Carney
Patrick Allitt
John Rodden
John Rossi





Breathe Catholic.

Recognized as one of America's premier Catholic liberal arts colleges, located in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, we offer our students a fully Catholic education, integrating Faith and Reason, while immersing our students in a vibrant Catholic culture.

Our extensive core curriculum and outstanding faculty, along with our unique Junior Semester in Rome Program, make our academic program one of the most demanding in the nation. And our community life – based on the ageless traditions of the Catholic Church – is second to none.

From the classroom to the chapel, the residence halls to the cafeteria, the athletic field to the dance floor, Catholicism joyfully lived is the air that we breathe, preparing our students to lead the New Evangelization.

Take a deep breath and immerse yourself.



CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

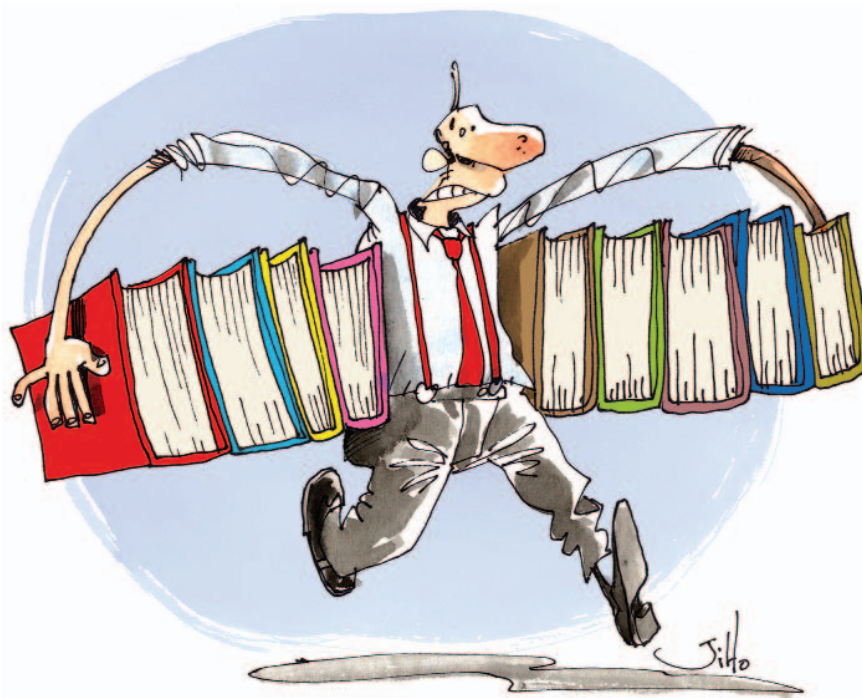
134 Christendom Drive, Front Royal, Virginia

800.877.5456 www.christendom.edu

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

December 2009 / Vol. 8, No. 15



WWW.CAGLECARTOONS.COM

[IDEAS]

Untenured Radical

BY PATRICK ALLITT George Scialabba's *What Are Intellectuals Good For?* is a liberal book conservatives can admire. **Page 6**

[CULTURE]

The Dangers of Literacy

BY ALBERT JAY NOCK The illusion that everyone can be taught to read degrades civilization. **Page 11**

[SYMPOSIUM]

The Best Books You Haven't Read

Fifteen literary and political thinkers offer their recommendations.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 18 David Bromwich | 19 Michael Lind | 21 Sam Tanenhaus |
| 18 Nick Gillespie | 20 John R. MacArthur | 21 Alexander Waugh |
| 18 Jeffrey Hart | 20 Justin Raimondo | 22 Chilton Williamson Jr. |
| 19 Jacob Heilbrunn | 20 Alfred S. Regnery | 22 Peter W. Wood |
| 19 Florence King | 21 George Scialabba | 22 Peregrine Worsthorne |

[LIBERTIES]

Ayn Shrugged

By Daniel Hannan For all her gifts, the goddess of the market was not a great novelist. **Page 24**

COLUMNS

13 Stuart Reid: Caught in the Rye

23 Eve Tushnet: Shelf Life

50 Bill Kauffman: Friendly Ghosts

NEWS & VIEWS

4 **Front Lines:** The Bible Gets Hannitized; China's Printing Presses; Cheney Legacy Project

10 **Syllabus:** Liberal Books Conservatives Should Read

ARTICLES

8 **John Carney:** Where have you gone, Henry Regnery?

14 **Daniel McCarthy:** Irving Kristol wrote the book on neoconservatism.

26 **Chase Madar:** Bernard-Henri Lévy overtakes Tocqueville.

30 **Sam Leith:** The black arts of literary biography

35 **Taki Theodoracopulos:** Hemingway's forever feast

37 **Helen Rittelmeyer:** 1,500 books in my purse

41 **John Rodden & John Rossi:** The history of John Lukacs

45 **R.J. Stove:** Thomas Macaulay, the learned Whig

REVIEWS

16 **Scott McConnell:** *The Israel Test* by George Gilder

27 **Alan Pell Crawford:** *An Artist in Treason: The Extraordinary Double Life of General James Wilkinson* by Andro Linklater

33 **Andrew McKie:** *Hiding Man: A Biography of Donald Barthelme* by Tracy Daugherty

38 **Norman Stone:** *Trotsky: A Biography* by Robert Service

48 **Septimus Waugh:** *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* by Greg Grandin

COVER ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS HIERS

[LIBERTIES]

FREE SPEECH AT A PRICE

We think it best to confess that we didn't buy all of the books reviewed in this issue. Publishers desperate to wedge their wares into the declining number of pages that the declining number of magazines devote to books eagerly send stacks of free copies. Along with a dozen "future of conservatism" texts and multiple volumes with "meltdown" in the titles, last week we scored advances of David Baldacci's new thriller and a definitive cupcake cookbook.

We flatter ourselves that we're not easily bought, but there's always a chance that this largesse has compromised our objectivity. So in the interest of maintaining *TAC*'s impeccable standards of journalistic integrity, we're leveling with you—also, we don't have \$11,000 sitting around.

Under new Federal Trade Commission guidelines, that's what it will cost amateur critics who endorse products without disclosing their compensation. Because the Obama administration apparently doesn't have enough to meddle in, the FTC has decreed—in a modest 81 pages of regulation—that online reviewers must make clear whether they paid for a good or service, the length of their relationship with the provider, any previous loot and the odds of getting more in the future. So far media is exempt—we're not taking our chances—but bloggers, the grandest opinionators of all, must come clean. Ditto Twitter tastemakers, in 140 characters, review included.

The point, ostensibly, is to protect gullible consumers from bribed critics. But the regulations' real effect is to prove that no commerce is private and no citizen is adult enough to operate without federal supervision. So before you confess on Facebook this Thanksgiving that you aren't a fan of Aunt Mabel's mincemeat pie, prepare to dis-



NATE BEELER WWW.CAGECARTOONS.COM

disclose that she's sent you countless socks and the occasional scarf over the years and that you fully expect to receive a fruitcake for Christmas.

[FAITH]

SCRIPTING SCRIPTURE

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Andrew Schlafly? The website Conservapedia—a right-wing substitute for Wikipedia—has decided to rewrite the Bible, which means the day might come when Schlafly, the site's founder, is counted the new St. Jerome.

But probably not. The recently launched Conservative Bible Project, which intends to scrub Holy Writ of "liberal bias," mostly manages to mangle familiar verses. For "blessed are meek" Conservapedia suggests, "Blessed are those that are not full of themselves."

The project's homepage explains that a conservative translation of the Bible is necessary because liberal distortion has robbed Christ's parables of "their full free-market meaning" and cluttered the text with "compound negatives and unnecessary ambiguities." Hence Conservapedia's decision to replace "comrade" with "volunteer." Other edits pander to target demographics—Matthew's description of John the Baptist has been altered to "emphasize his character as an outdoorsman." In retelling the

story of Sodom and Gomorrah, Conservapedia's translators render the mob scene outside Lot's house thus: "The Sodomites said, 'Stand aside. You're new around here and you think you can tell us what to do?'" Yeah, pilgrim.

By bending a sacred text to crude political ends, Conservapedia commits the same blasphemy as feminists who claim the Trinity comprises Mother, Daughter, and Holy Womb. To put our objection to this in language Conservapedia's editors might understand: Render unto talk radio what is talk radio's, and leave what is God's out of it.

[NEOCONS]

ALL IN THE FAMILY

How Elizabeth Cheney must make Pop proud. As a college student in Colorado in 1988, the daughter of the future veep wrote her senior thesis on "The Evolution of Presidential War Powers," a subject that her father went on to make his own. Today, Liz, 49 and no longer able to use her surname to find work in the State Department, has formed a pressure group to keep the familial legacy aflame. It's called—don't laugh—"Keep America Safe."

Assisted by co-chairs Debra Burlingame—sister of the pilot whose plane crashed into the Pentagon on 9/11—and, of course, the ubiquitous

William Kristol, *la* Cheney's mission is to criticize the White House for having adopted policies that "appease our adversaries." By scrapping the missile shield in Eastern Europe, denouncing torture, and pausing before another troop surge in Afghanistan, Obama is "weakening our nation."

Instead, the new commander in chief should do exactly what Dick and Dubya did: menace (preferably invade) any country *The Weekly Standard* doesn't care for, dismantle the Constitution, spy on citizens, and pretend it's all for freedom's sake. "Keep America Safe" by pursuing the very policies that have wrecked U.S. power over the last eight years.

"The Left has dozens of organizations and tens of millions of dollars dedicated to undercutting the war on terror," warbled Kristol. "The good guys need some help, too." Happily, the group's expensive launch—complete with fear-peddling video about the perils of executive weakness—went largely unnoticed. Apart from a few hawking heads on TV, nobody seems too concerned with what the daughter of the worst vice president in American history has to say. But don't expect daddy's little girl to disappear: it's reported that Liz is angling for a Virginia congressional seat in 2012.

[ECONOMY] **MAD MONEY**

The Federal Reserve, Treasury, and Congress have had one solution to the financial crisis: more money. Print it, redistribute it, spend it even before the greenbacks roll off the press. Keep interest rates low and get the banks to manufacture more money, which they do every time they take in and loan out deposits.

The result has been the plummeting of the dollar's value. Once again, it's near parity with the currency affectionately known as the "looney," the Canadian dollar. Even as the stock market bounds

past 10,000 again, causing Pollyanna pundits to hail recovery, our currency sinks. And off in the distance, the "BRIC" states—Brazil, Russia, India, and China, would-be financial titans of the future—rumble about replacing the dollar as the world's reserve currency.

What happens when U.S. banks, still cautious about making loans, start lending full throttle? What happens if the return of boom-time speculation coincides with falling confidence in the dollar and the creation of a new reserve currency? We might not feel exactly like Weimar or Venezuela, but we would not be able, as the divorce lawyers say, to live in the manner to which we have become accustomed.

But Uncle Sam's monopoly money might get a short-term reprieve. That's because the spendthrift ways of other governments remain competitive with those of our own. Consider what China has been doing to its money supply, as noted by analyst Mike Shedlock:

The Chinese central bank's printing and respective Chinese bank lending make us look like amateurs. Chinese central bank assets and the money supply are up 25-26% annualized YTD. But this growth rate of money supply and bank lending is what is required to make up for the 8-10% net contraction in output from the collapse in exports and export-related production.

Meanwhile, back in the US, total bank credit is contracting while M2 is up 5% annualized YTD.

It's hardly a comforting thought, but the U.S. might restore the appearance of prosperity not by generating more goods and actual wealth but simply by remaining a haven from the even more reckless policies of other nations' central banks. The end result, however, will be a crash not only of America's economy but the entire industrialized world's. ■

The American Conservative

Publisher
Ron Unz

Editor at Large
Scott McConnell

Executive Editor
Kara Hopkins

Senior Editor
Daniel McCarthy

Literary Editor
Freddy Gray

Contributing Editors

W. James Antle III, Andrew J. Bacevich, Doug Bandow, Jeremy Beer, James Bovard, Patrick Deneen, Michael Desch, Richard Gamble, Philip Giraldi, David Gordon, Paul Gottfried, Leon Hadar, Peter Hitchens, Philip Jenkins, Daniel Larison, Christopher Layne, Eric S. Margolis, James P. Pinkerton, Justin Raimondo, Fred Reed, Stuart Reid, Sheldon Richman, Steve Sailer, John Schwenkler, R.J. Stove, Kelley B. Vlahos, Thomas E. Woods Jr.

Art Director
Mark Graef
Illustrator
Chris Hiers

Associate Publisher
Jon Basil Utley

Publishing Consultant
Ronald E. Burr

Founding Editors
Patrick J. Buchanan, Taki Theodoracopulos

The American Conservative, Vol. 8, No. 15, December 2009 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 12 times per year for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (12 issues) in the U.S., \$69.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$89.97 other foreign via airmail. Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries—

By phone: **800-579-6148**
(outside the U.S./Canada 856-380-4131)

Via Web: www.amconmag.com

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

Inquiries and letters to the editor should be sent to letters@amconmag.com. For advertising sales call Ronald Burr at 703-893-3632. For editorial, call 703-875-7600.

This issue went to press on October 22, 2009.
Copyright 2009 *The American Conservative*.

[What Are Intellectuals Good For? by George Scialabba]

Untenured Radical

Clearing space for the utopian imagination

By Patrick Allitt

SPARE A THOUGHT, conservatives, for America's leftist intellectuals. The Right has had its ups and downs over the last 30 years, but the Left has had nothing but downs. What could be more painful than to see so many of your hopes hammered flat by history, so many good intentions turned to ashes? All the more reason then for readers from Left and Right alike to salute George Scialabba, whose new book teaches valuable lessons on how to look difficulties in the face and to accept defeat gracefully.

Scialabba is a rare bird among serious nonfiction writers in that he's not a professor or a foundation fellow. In some ways reminiscent of the longshoreman-philosopher Eric Hoffer, he comes to the work of Plato, David Hume, Matthew Arnold, and Karl Marx not on the basis of a life spent in university seminars but from his own experiences as a social worker and office clerk. He can always produce an appropriate insight from John Stuart Mill or a scintillating quip from George Bernard Shaw. He keeps alive the ideals of the Enlightenment, dares to think utopian thoughts, and still feels the romantic pull of the Left, but hardly ever succumbs to wishful thinking. This collection of his essays and reviews from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s makes surprising reading, not least because Scialabba, from a principled position on the Left, makes so many assertions with which conservatives will readily agree.

His heroes are the public intellectuals of the 20th century who spoke for a humane version of socialism, who

rebuked cruelty and malice wherever they found them (including on their own side), and who resisted the temptation of thinking in lockstep for political reasons. He singles out for high praise Randolph Bourne, Dwight Macdonald, George Orwell, and Irving Howe among the English speakers, Albert Camus, Nicola Chiaromonte, and Ignazio Silone among the Europeans. They all brought wide learning, moral subtlety, and a refined literary style to their work.

Why, Scialabba asks, are such writers no longer to be found? Part of the problem is the greater complexity of the world, many elements of which can be mastered only through years of technical training and specialization. A general familiarity with the humanities and a deep sense of common decency might have been sufficient for Orwell to denounce the Communists in the Spanish Civil War, but it's not enough when the issues are ICBM-targeting doctrine, biotechnological research, and the arcane lore of leveraged buyouts. Today's public intellectuals find it difficult to speak confidently on more than a few topics. Another part of the problem is the vastly increased sophistication of government and corporations, whose manipulation of the media and whose skillful, unrelenting propaganda have come almost to shape the reality in which we live. "When amateurs were in charge of deceiving the public about American foreign policy," Scialabba writes, "they did it badly; Henry Kissinger, Richard Perle, and Elliott Abrams are another matter entirely."

But must increasing complexity and the sinister reach of propaganda end the dream of a better world? In a meditation on utopianism, Scialabba says no. He understands the intellectual progress of recent centuries as a joint venture undertaken by skeptics and visionaries, who challenged ancient falsehoods and dreamed of a finer world: "The skeptics can be seen as clearing a space for the utopian imagination, for prophecies of a demystified community, of solidarity without illusions. The skeptics weed, the visionaries water." He is not ashamed to outline his own utopia, a world in which everyone will sing in harmony at least once a week, in which folks will know plenty of great poems and speeches by heart, have useful and stimulating work, enjoy civil arguments with one another, won't depend on consumerism for a feeling of self-worth, and will be able to hike in unspoiled wilderness. I would be glad to join him there.

Scialabba regrets that most leftist intellectuals have given up on utopia and retreated completely into academic life. They deceive themselves, he argues, when they claim that their esoteric work in critical theory has political significance. Their ventures in multiculturalism, he adds, are often mere academic empire building, which do little or nothing to aid the actual disadvantaged members of society. Worse, by asserting that their academic work is "political," they feel absolved from doing the hard and joyless work of organizing and agitating that their predecessors generally undertook.

Equally, he regards the Left's politicization of high culture as "misguided and counterproductive," and he deplores the "staggering amount of mediocre and tendentious" art that has been produced on behalf of political correctness. In an essay about *The New Criterion*, he notes that its editors, Hilton Kramer and Roger Kimball, find it difficult to specify the exact aesthetic and moral criteria by which all art should be judged. Never mind, he says, it is enough that they "muddle along, employing and occasionally articulating the criteria that have emerged from our culture's conversation since the Greeks initiated it, and showing that what used to and still usually does underwrite our judgments about beauty and truth is inconsistent with giving Robert Mapplethorpe a one-man show ... or Toni Morrison a Nobel Prize."

He has no patience with writers whose zeal leads them to misrepresent their opponents. For example, in a devastating critique of Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, he describes the Palestinian scholar's tendency to offer only a grotesquely distorted version of his antagonists' views, straw men that are inevitably easy to knock over. Said's writing is "clumsy, stilted, verbose, imprecise and marinated—pickled—in academic jargon," and his "polemical manners are atrocious." You can almost taste Scialabba's indignation as he reproaches Christopher Hitchens for abandoning old friends after 9/11 and becoming an aggressive advocate of war against radical Islam: "On and on Hitchens's polemics against the left have raged, a tempest of inaccuracy, illogic, and malice," whose cumulative effect has been to damage his "reputation for fairness and urbanity."

Scialabba is often hard on conservatives, too. He describes the late Irving Kristol as an "anti-public intellectual" and makes a persuasive case that William F. Buckley Jr. never understood

the irreconcilability of Catholicism and capitalism, his Church and his ideology. In many places, however, Scialabba's ideas do coincide with those of conservatives. This convergence is apparent, first, in his recognition that elites are indispensable and that it's no good hoping for sustained virtue and wisdom from "the people." Democracy and equality are ideals to aspire to, but ineradicable differences among people, and the fact that most people are neither willing nor able to lead, puts responsibility in the hands of a conscientious and highly educated minority.

Another point of convergence is Scialabba's rejection of economic centralization and his acceptance of the market economy. In an essay on the English philosopher John Gray, he writes that "self-reliance, self-restraint, and the other virtues fostered by market relations are indispensable" and that "markets are far superior epistemically to any alternative yet proposed."

Most conservatives would stay with him when he makes an important qualification: "It is also true that humans flourish only in the shelter of families, neighborhoods, tribes, traditions, and well-known and loved places, and only with a minimum of economic security," all of which are threatened by the remorseless spread of market relations into ever more areas of human life. He takes seriously the idea that modernity constitutes a vast assault on family integrity. In a sympathetic reading of Christopher Lasch's *Haven in a Heartless World*, he recognizes the possibility that civilization took a fatal wrong turn when it accepted mass industrialization. It snuffed out the possibility of small-scale production and the family as the basic productive unit in the economy, changes with whose jarring psychological consequences we are still coming to terms. Scialabba's gloss on Lasch brings to mind Russell Kirk's inveighing against industrialization in the

opening pages of *The Conservative Mind*. He also deplores the remorseless grip of television, arguing that young Americans who watch hundreds of hours of junk TV are fatally compromised in their ability to learn and love their nation's political traditions.

Scialabba opposes the standardization and facelessness that often accompany modernity. In an essay on Michael Walzer, he speaks up against abstractions and in favor of particular, usually national, loyalties. "The minimal code of near-universally recognized rights that underwrites international law is too thin to support a dense moral culture. Only a shared history—which usually means a national history—of moral discourse, political conflict, and literary achievement can generate values of sufficient thickness and depth." Again, conservative readers would nod in agreement.

Moreover, Scialabba resists the temptation to think that the end sometimes justifies the means. He praises Lionel Trilling for his chastened sense of progressivism, his insistence that moral scrupulosity always matters, no matter how desirable the political objective. Trilling's view, he argues, was "yes to greater equality, inclusiveness, cooperation, tolerance, social experimentation, individual freedom ... but only after listening to everything that can be said against one's cherished projects, assuming equal intelligence and good faith on the part of one's opponents, and tempering one's zeal with the recognition that every new policy has unintended consequences, sometimes very bad ones." Insights like these, scattered throughout this collection, offer a welcome reminder that the distance between at least some parts of the Left and Right is far smaller than our more irritable pundits would like us to believe.

A cloud of gloom hangs over most of these essays, but Scialabba never feels sorry for himself. You can rely on him to

inject flashes of wit into the most sober accounts of the Left's decline. He describes Stanley Fish's mood as "about as wistful as the twelve-cylinder engine of his infamous Jaguar," and he imagines Russell Jacoby as a kind of intellectual dentist "scouring verbal plaque and conceptual decay with his high-powered electric-sarcastic drill." Advocates of multiculturalism, he observes in another review, including "quite a few college presidents, professors, schoolteachers, and principals," are "plausibly depicted, largely in their own words, as horses' asses."

It's hard to imagine that readers of *The American Conservative* would turn left after reading Scialabba's essays. More likely, they will be astonished at his stubborn integrity on behalf of a vanishing ideal. Perhaps, however, he will make them re-think certain overused formulae, such as the familiar claim that Marxist theory led straight to the Gulag Archipelago. Not so, says Scialabba; Stalinism was "more like Czarism plus electricity." The horrors of 20th-century Soviet history will be grasped not by a study of dialectical materialism but only by prolonged learning in Russian history.

Agreed. We all get lazy, we all have intellectual blind spots, and there's a great deal to be said for thinking unfamiliar thoughts, especially when they are attractively and persuasively presented by a graceful stylist. Travel broadens the mind, and a journey into George Scialabba's mental world—at once entirely familiar and strangely foreign—will remind us that history is rarely the struggle of right against wrong. Much more often it is the struggle of right against right. ■

Patrick Allitt is a professor of history at Emory University. He is author of The Conservatives: Ideas and Personalities Throughout American History and Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985.

Party Favors

Conservative bestsellers run long on celebrity but short on ideas.

By John Carney

EVEN IN LEAN ECONOMIC times, conservative books are a booming business. Once right-wing publishing was the province of profitless true believers. Now conservative imprints are ensconced in most of New York's major publishing houses. The liberals who dominate the scene hold their noses while their hired-hand conservatives bid big dollars for contracts with the Right's marquee names.

On one level, it is tempting to greet the rise of the conservative bestseller with elation. Our long exile from the world of letters has ended. We're on the *New York Times* bestseller list. We have arrived. But where?

The triumph of conservative book sales has not coincided with great gains for conservative ideas in politics or the broader culture. Conservatives hold little sway in the Republican Party, and the Republican Party holds little sway in the nation's capital. We're the backbench of a minority. More importantly, there's not much intellectual rigor in the Right's bestsellers. For all the pages printed, the movement runs short on real ideas.

Before Regnery Publishing launched a million anti-Clinton tracts—the first signal to mainstream houses that a certain kind of conservative book could power up the charts—it dealt in short runs of weighty tomes and took a kind of pride in the purity of its niche. Founder Henry Regnery observed in his *Memoirs of a Dissident Publisher*, "In

matters of excellence the market is a poor judge. The books that are most needed are often precisely those that will have only a modest sale." He lived by those words—early Regnery books included such highbrow, less-than-stellar sellers as Catholic existentialist Gabriel Marcel's *Man Against Mass Society* and Martin Heidegger's *What Is a Thing?* "A remark my father made to me sticks in my memory," he recalled, "If you ever begin to make any money in that business you are going into, you can be pretty sure that you are publishing the wrong kind of books."

Regnery made bold choices, also bringing to market works by untested authors—a young Yale student, one William F. Buckley Jr., taking aim at his godless university, and an eccentric Michigan State history instructor whose *Conservative Mind* would become the movement's catechism. Back then criticism of liberalism was subject to the standards of good literature and the demands of logic, with stalwarts like Albert J. Nock, T.S. Eliot, and Richard M. Weaver at the helm. They built a canon that has endured for generations.

Now conservative offerings come with diagrams of farting cows—bless Glenn Beck. No one is likely to have his worldview rocked by Sean Hannity's *Deliver Us From Evil* or his political eyes opened by Michelle Malkin's *Unhinged*. Laura Ingraham's *Shut Up and Sing* slides easily down the memory hole. But permanence isn't their intent.

Conservatism has shifted from a modest cast of mind to a playground contest of insults. Millions can play along.

This isn't to say that bestselling conservative authors don't manage to pack arguments into their books or buttress those arguments with facts and footnotes. But they do not aim to challenge the faithful or change the minds of their opponents—to turn moderates into conservatives or shake liberals from their delusions. Conservative readers are looking for how-to manuals—an easy way to beat that liberal sister-in-law in a dinner-table debate. Thus Beck's latest blockbuster offers “the secret formula to winning arguments against people with big mouths but small minds.”

But it may be too generous to say that book buyers are only looking for ammunition: many conservative bestsellers aren't purchased to be read so much as to be owned. In the bully's game that talk-radio conservatism has become, if you can't keep Barack Obama out of the Oval Office, there's at least some satisfaction in forcing the *New York Times* to put *Obamanation* at the top of its list. Besides, stocking up on conservative kitsch yields a rush of inclusion, like wearing the jersey of a favorite football team. Being on the Right is no longer a lonely struggle standing athwart history; it can be more like standing in a stadium doing the wave.

Of course, fan clubs need stars, and the conservative galaxy has its own leading lights. Look at the right-wingers scaling the lists—Glenn Beck, Mark Levin, Michelle Malkin, Bill O'Reilly, Laura Ingraham, Joe Scarborough. All were autographs long before they stretched their literary limbs. Then look at a few of the other luminaries sharing space with them on the *NYT* list: actor Patrick Swayze, comedienne Kathy Griffin, late-night talk-show host Craig Ferguson. New York publishers are not interested in advancing the conservative

case, and apologetics aren't the product for sale. Celebrity is merely exerting its endless fascination, and the Right has adopted a blueprint long ago perfected by the Hollywood Left.

No surprise then that conservative books feature prominent pictures of the authors on their covers—complete with flowing blonde mane and low-cut dress for those who can pull it off. Who they are is at least as important as what they are saying, and the texts are written the way a talk-radio show is produced—centered around a charismatic host. These authors are no more expected to be masters of the writer's craft than Chelsea Handler, whose dizzy *Are You There, Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea* recently spent 47 weeks in the top 15. Their job isn't to enlighten but to entertain. The minds grow dimmer as the stars shine brighter.

The conservatives who sell by the hundreds of thousands belong in the same category—of intellectual depth as well as sales—as professional wrestlers, sit-com stars, and self-help gurus. Radio and TV talker Glenn Beck didn't extract \$3 million from Simon & Schuster for his next two books by virtue of his expertise on climate change but by sheer force of personality. His breakout bestseller, *An Inconvenient Book*, debuted at the top of the charts and sold over half a million copies. In it, he dishes on everything from tipping in restaurants (15 percent is too much) to dating (decide in the first two minutes whether it will work) to what America can do about oil dependence (nothing—we're screwed). This is part of his mass appeal: his opinions are unbounded.

Where once conservatives revered Russell Kirk for his historical analysis of the roots of American order or the discovery of a conservative strain in Anglo-American thought, now the Right finds its heroes living, breathing, crying, and laughing. Beck is famous for shedding

tears then breaking into mirth on air. He is not limited by the need to gain expertise before confidently concluding that he's right—the more rashly, the better.

Then there's the other equation conservatives have solved: controversy sells. Witness the success of Mackenzie Phillips's celebrity incest tell-all, now in its third week on the *New York Times* list. On the cover of Beck's newest number one, the indelicately titled *Arguing With Idiots*, he poses in an East German military uniform. Inside, he predictably races through the familiar stops—Chappaquiddick, gun grabbing, socialist creep. Not without calculation did he recently declare, on one of those Sunday morning shows watched by people who don't go to church anymore, “The Manchurian candidate couldn't destroy us faster than Barack Obama. If you were planning a sleeper to come in and become president of the United States, this is how he would do it.” Persuasion isn't the point. Beck is fighting his way to the next million. The more liberals hate him, the more his fans will love him—and the more books he'll sell.

Mark Levin, whose *Liberty and Tyranny: A Conservative Manifesto* has sold over one million copies and spent 12 weeks in the top spot of the *NYT* list, is less campy than Beck but no less combative. Intellectual conservatives may find his angry style off-putting, but there are too few of them to guarantee a million-dollar deal. Levin is playing to an easier crowd: what is most striking about *Liberty and Tyranny* is how familiar much of it would be to anyone who has even a glancing acquaintance with the major works of conservative literature. Yet his book is hailed as groundbreaking by those who can fit their creed on a bumper sticker.

With the rise of right-wing radio and cable talk, conservatives have found a way to hawk their wares. While Regnery

books may rank on the *New York Times* bestseller list, they're still quarantined from its review pages. But a spin round the radio dial and a spot on "Fox & Friends" can vault a book to top-ten status. The author only gets a six-minute segment, so his sell needs to be simple, catchy, familiar.

When it began publishing conservative books in the late '80s, Free Press brought out serious thinkers like Robert Bork, Francis Fukuyama, and Charles Murray. In 1994, it was gobbled up by Simon & Schuster, which two years earlier had seen Rush Limbaugh's *The Way Things Ought to Be*—considered a

minor acquisition at the time—rocket up the *NYT* list to hold the top spot for 24 weeks. The formula was simple: find a conservative star able to stir up a right-wing audience. These books weren't plotted to reach the general reading public but to engage a new customer: the radio fan willing to buy books. Far from signaling a broadening of the conservative appeal in return for conceding some depth, bestseller status merely indicates migration from one medium of conservative talk to another. All the morning zoo tricks transfer easily to text.

"We published some good books, several, unquestionably, of outstanding quality, which were also well produced," Henry Regnery wrote of his work in early conservative publishing. "We confronted conventional opinion with some questions it could not evade and found difficult if not impossible to answer. ... We did not make any money, but that was not my primary objective." It may be that conservatives can't have it both ways. They can either write thoughtful books that sell a few thousand copies. Or they can move millions by the same scheme the Left uses to break onto the bestseller lists then fill the remainder bins—celebrity, controversy, mass appeal.

The poet and sometime senator Gene McCarthy once described bad signs one could come across in his home state of Minnesota. "We Serve All Faiths" was perhaps the worst—the slogan of a mortician. When New York publishers got into the conservative book business, they might have hung out a similar shingle. For while a few rich people have gotten richer by leaping into the publishing mainstream, the movement has lost its conservative mind. ■

John Carney writes from New York City. He is managing editor of Clusterstock.

Liberal Books Conservatives Should Read

Charles Beard — *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*

Daniel Bell — *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*

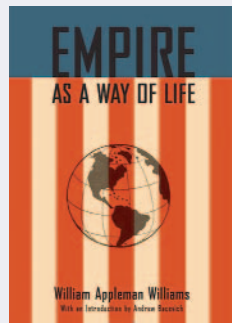
Smedley Butler — *War Is a Racket*

John Patrick Diggins — *The Lost Soul of American Politics*

Michael Harrington — *The Other America*

Louis Hartz — *The Liberal Tradition in America*

James Howard Kunstler — *The Geography of Nowhere*



Lewis Lapham — *Pretensions to Empire*

Christopher Lasch — *Culture of Narcissism*

Tony Judt — *Reappraisals*

Dwight Macdonald — *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*

Norman Mailer — *The Big Empty*

Eugene McCarthy — *The Limits of Power*

Reinhold Niebuhr — *The Irony of American History*

Fritz Stern — *The Politics of Cultural Despair*

I.F. Stone — *The Trial of Socrates*

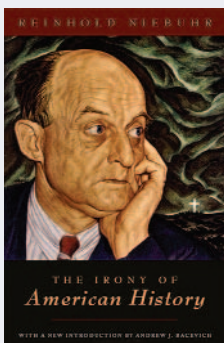
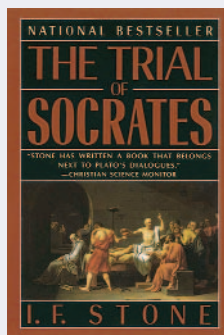
Lionel Trilling — *The Liberal Imagination*

Gore Vidal — *Washington, D.C.*

James Weinstein — *The Long Detour*

William Appleman Williams — *Empire as a Way of Life*

Michael Young — *The Rise of the Meritocracy*



The Dangers of Literacy

Millions of readers create a market for mediocrity.

By Albert Jay Nock

NOT LONG AGO I looked over a library said to contain a copy of every book published in America down to the year 1800. It bore witness that in those days reading was a fairly serious business; I could find nothing resembling what we should call popular literature on the shelves. The inference was that literacy was not general and that those who read did so for other purposes than mere pastime, purposes that were pretty strictly non-sensational; and there is every collateral evidence that such was the case.

Thomas Jefferson laid great stress on literacy as an indispensable asset to good citizenship and sound patriotism. He was all for having everybody become literate, and those who have examined his own library (it is preserved intact in the Library of Congress) may easily see why. *Mutatis mutandis*, if everybody read the kind of thing he did, and as he did, he would have been right. But in his laudable wish to make the benefits of literacy accessible to all, Mr. Jefferson did not see that he had the operation of two natural laws dead against him. He seems to have jumped to the conclusion that, because certain qualified persons got a definite benefit out of literacy, anybody could get the same benefit on the same terms; and here he collided with the law of diminishing returns. He seems also to have imagined that a general indiscriminate literacy would be compatible with keeping up something like the proportion that he saw existing between good literature and bad; and here the great and good old man ran hard aground on Gresham's law.

Gresham's law has to do with the nature of currency, and the common formula for it is that "bad money drives out good." That is to say, it is always the worst form of currency in circulation that fixes the value of all the others and causes them presently to disappear. Gresham's law usually comes into play whenever a government undertakes to settle a bill for its misfeasances by the larcenous expedient of "managing" its currency; hence of late years this law has been very busy with the currency of many countries.

I spent some time last year in Portugal, where the status of literacy and the conditions of the book-market are about what they were in Mr. Jefferson's America. One saw very little "popular literature" on sale but an astonishingly large assortment of the better kind. I made my observations at the right moment, apparently, because, like all good modern republicans, the Portuguese have lately become infected with Mr. Jefferson's ideas about literacy and are trying to have everybody taught to read and write; and it interested me to see that they are setting about this quite in our own incurious, hand-over-head fashion, without betraying the faintest notion that anything like a natural law may be a factor in the situation.

Doubtless what has happened elsewhere will happen there. In the first place, the Portuguese are likely to discover that, while no illiterate person can read, it is a mere *non distributio medii* to

conclude that any literate person can read. The fact is that relatively few literate persons can read; the proportion appears to be quite small. I do not mean to say that the majority are unable to read intelligently; I mean that they are unable to read at all—unable, that is, to gather from a printed paragraph anything like a correct idea of its content. They can pretty regularly make out the meaning of printed matter which is addressed to mere sensation, like news-matter, statistics, or perhaps an "informative" editorial or article, provided it be dosed out in very short sentences and three-line paragraphs; but this is not reading, and the ability to do it but barely implies the exercise of any faculty that could be called distinctively human. One can almost imagine an intelligent anthropoid trained to do it about as well and to about as good purpose; in fact, I once heard of a horse that was trained to do it in a small way. Reading, as distinguished from this kind of proficiency, implies a use of the reflective faculty, and not many persons



have this faculty. According to the newspapers, Mr. Butler, the president of Columbia University, was complaining the other day that the practice of reflective thought had pretty well ceased among us. There is much to be said on this topic, but it is enough to remark here that literacy will not do duty for the power of reflective thought where such does not exist, nor does a state of literacy presuppose its existence.

The average literate person being devoid of reflective power but capable of sensation, his literacy creates a demand for a large volume of printed matter addressed to sensation; and this form of literature, being the worst in circulation, fixes the value of all the rest and tends to drive it out. In this country, for example, it has been interesting to

see the reluctant and gradual submission of some of our few "serious" publications to this inevitable fixing of value. They have brought their aim continually closer to the aim of journalism, addressing themselves more and more to sensation, less and less to reflection, until now their policy favors almost exclusively the kind of thing one would naturally look for in an enterprising Sunday newspaper. Only the other day I came across a market-letter put out by a firm of literary agents, and I observed with interest that "the serious essay, travel, foreign-affairs type of article is unlikely to find a good market, unless by a well-known name."

I had occasion lately to look up something that one of our "quality" magazines published in 1874, and as I went

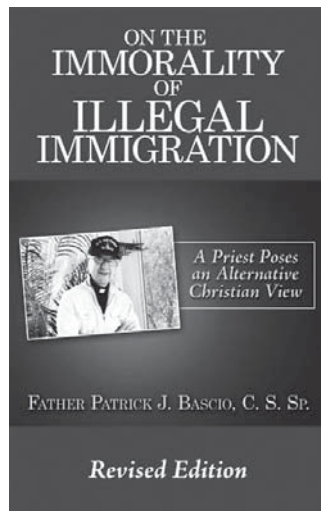
through the two bound volumes I noticed the relative space they gave to material addressed to the power of reflective thought. For curiosity I made a comparison with last year's issues of the same magazine; and I can not suggest a more convincing exercise for any person who doubts the validity of Gresham's law in the premises, nor can I suggest a more substantial basis for generalization.

Gresham's law has, in fact, done far more than revolutionize publishing; it has set up a brand-new business. In the face of this fact, which seems none too well understood, we see publishers and authors occasionally showing something of the splendid intrepidity that one admires in the leader of a forlorn hope, and one thinks of them as perhaps the most public-spirited of all created beings.

Our idea of mass education does vast credit to our intentions; like perpetual motion, the thing would be fine if it would work, but the mischief of it is to keep it from colliding with natural law. As results stand now, a graduating class of two, three, or five hundred persons is practically nothing but a tableau display of what the law of diminishing returns can do when it tries. Again, the promotion of mass literacy is a noble experiment, but apparently there is no way to accommodate our idea of it to the insidious action of Gresham's law. With regard to these and all other aspects of our equalitarian social theory, my only aim is the humble one of suggesting that we bear in mind the disregard that nature has for unintelligent good intentions and the vixenish severity with which she treats them. ■

Albert Jay Nock (1873-1945) was editor of The Freeman and author of Memoirs of a Superfluous Man, among many others. This essay is taken from "The Gods' Lookout," February 1934.

New Book Confronts the Immorality ...of Illegal Immigration



"Fr. Bascio leaves no doubt that many Christian leaders have overlooked the injustice of illegal immigration to America's poor in their calculus of charity. Those leaders deserve an 'F' in the math of morality. Fr. Bascio deserves an 'A' based on reason and scripture."
—James Edwards, Ph.D., author, *The Congressional Politics of Immigration Reform*

**On the Immorality of Illegal Immigration:
A Priest Poses an Alternative Christian View**
2009, 213 pp., \$16.50 postpaid



Available as an ebook • \$4.95

Order today from Amazon.com or authorhouse.com • 888-519-5121

Caught in the Rye

Here's one anniversary that has not yet piqued the curiosity of the *New York Review of Books*. It is now 50 years since I first read *The Catcher in the Rye* and 50

years, too, since I was expelled, more or less, from Ampleforth College in the north of England. The two events are related: if it hadn't been for J.D. Salinger, I might have had a lousy education. I swear to God.

As it is, after leaving school abruptly at 16—the same age as Holden Caulfield when he flunked out of Pencey Prep—I went to a “crammar” straight out of P.G. Wodehouse. I smoked, I drank, I dated—or dreamt of dating—girls from the Lycée Français, and sat around my parents' apartment wondering where the ducks in Central Park go in winter when the lagoon freezes over. It makes me sag with embarrassment to think about it now. My contemporaries, meanwhile, went on to university and thence into government, law, medicine, industry, and the Church. I eventually joined an evening newspaper in the provinces. After nine months as a junior reporter, I was sacked. Two years later, I was assistant editor of *Ice Cream Industry*. The editor was a stick-thin alcoholic lesbian called Bunty, who could turn a bit funny after lunch.

Perhaps I could sue Salinger for psychological damage and loss of earnings, but so, no doubt, could hundreds of thousands of other boys of my generation. He was one of the key agents of corruption in the 1950s and '60s, the Jimmy Dean of the typewriter. It's hard to believe it now, but to a certain sort of boy, he was a god.

Girls were more discriminating. An American woman living in London—a child of the '60s—told me the other day

that she had found *Catcher* coarse and unintelligible and *Franny and Zooey* just “yuck.” “When people started talking about Salinger, I just, like, kept my mouth shut,” she said. “I am afraid I was more interested in Kafka, Dostoyevsky, Thomas Mann, and George Eliot.”

Blimey O'Reilly, I thought. My American friend is pretty hip, but the women who in the '50s and '60s took up arms against Salinger were not. They wore hats and gloves and butterfly-wing spectacles and denounced *Catcher* as

tearing me *apart!*” teenagers everywhere roll on the floor laughing.

But “Rebel” was always trash; *Catcher* was not, is not. When I reread it the other day, I was less disgusted than I had expected—hoped—to be. In fact, I rather admired it. Perhaps at last I am old enough for the book. J.D. Salinger was, in *Catcher* at least, a master craftsman. No one had ears as sharp as his. The patois goes way beyond teenspeak. No kid had the wit to talk or think like Holden or to make such happy use of repetitions, nonsequiturs, and wry irony: “I don't even like *old* cars. I mean they don't even interest me. I'd rather have a goddam horse. A horse is at least *human*, for God's sake.”

CHILDREN TODAY ARE **TOO WORLDLY TO BUY TEENAGE ANGST**, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY KNOW **THEY CAN GET IT FOR FREE**.

obscene, thus missing the point entirely: there may have been a case for banning it, even for burning it, but the case did not rest on its PG-rated sex scenes or its notional blasphemies. No, it was a bad book because it encouraged self-love and self-pity on a massive, antisocial scale.

I remember my alarm a few years ago when I found that my youngest son was reading it. I need not have worried: the book made little impression on him. “I could quite easily have lived without the experience,” he now tells me. Anything else? Yeah, he said, he didn't like all those “goddams.” Now that *Catcher* is assigned, it no longer corrupts, apparently. Children today are too worldly to buy teenage angst, perhaps because they know they can get it for free. When crazy, mixed-up Jim Stark in “Rebel Without a Cause” cries out to his parents, “You're

Salinger is doing pretty well. He is now 90, and for more than 40 years, as all readers of middlebrow magazines know, has lived as a recluse in Cornish, New Hampshire. Perhaps it's the sunflower seeds he eats, perhaps it's the homeopathy (or the “urine therapy”), perhaps it's the 1940s movies he watches. Maybe he's just lucky. Whatever the case, it's time to let bygones be bygones. I forgive Salinger for messing with my head.

And give him this: at least he did not go the celebrity route. He did not become a TV bore or even, in Holden's sense of the word, a phony. Of course he was a phony, but like Holly Golightly, he was a *real* phony. America giveth and America taketh away, but it never took anything away from old Jerry, who looks like making it to 100, at least. I bet that kills him. ■

Kristol Reflections

How the neocon godfather rewrote the American Right

By Daniel McCarthy

WHEN IRVING KRISTOL died on Sept. 18, neoconservatism lost more than just its “godfather.” It lost its most unabashed exponent, “a true, self-confessed—perhaps the only—neoconservative,” as he described himself in the title of a 1979 essay. Others of his persuasion have disclaimed the label, coined as a reproach by the socialist Michael Harrington. But Kristol embraced it. Indeed, he expanded on it, explaining in *Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea* that he had always been a “neo” of one kind or another: “a neo-Marxist, a neo-Trotskyist, a neo-socialist, a neoliberal, and finally a neoconservative.”

After the Bush years, during which defenders of the administration insisted that anyone who spoke of “neoconservatives” really meant “Jews,” it is refreshing to return to Kristol’s frank self-description. He was not coy about his influences, either: he wrote that after Marxist philosopher Sidney Hook, “the two thinkers who had the greatest subsequent impact on my thinking were Lionel Trilling and Leo Strauss.”

He was comfortable with his radical past. “I don’t really mind when some journalist, even ... a half-century later, casually refers to me as an ‘ex-Trotskyist.’ I regard myself as lucky to have been a young Trotskyist and have not a single bitter memory.” He had personal as well as ideological reasons for feeling that way, for it was through the Young People’s Socialist League that the 20-year-old Kristol met his wife-to-be, Gertrude Himmelfarb. “She had a trim figure and a strong, handsome face that radiated intelligence and sensibility,” he

recalled. Theirs was an old-fashioned courtship: “Many of the young Trotskyists were bohemian in their ‘lifestyles,’ but that was not for me. Trotskyist or no, radical socialist or no, I was bourgeois to the core,” he recalled. Therein lay the seeds of his future neoconservatism.

Kristol’s work as polemicist and public intellectual is best understood in light of his lifelong desire to be on the right side of the Left, first as an anti-Stalinist and Cold War liberal, later as a neoconservative. His battles were part of a civil war within American liberalism. If he and his allies later came to be called conservatives of some kind, it was not on account of any affinity with the historic American Right: “The traditional Republican party that was so alien to us was a party of the business community and of smaller-town America. It had, traditionally, little use for intellectuals ... it was still campaigning against the New Deal; and in foreign policy, its inclination was almost always isolationist.” But beginning in the 1960s, the defining issues in American elections would not be balanced budgets or the role of U.S. power in the world but questions of cultural identity. Kristol, an early critic of “the counterculture,” would find a welcoming home on the post-Goldwater Right. And once he did, he would help to complete the transformation of American conservatism into a populist anti-Left.

He was born in Brooklyn in 1920 to an Orthodox Jewish family that was not deeply religious or political. “I felt no passionate attachment to Judaism, or to Zionism, or even to the Jewish people,”

he recalled—though he got an early taste of Marxism from “the only magazine that entered our house ... *The New Masses*, to which my sister subscribed.” He acquired his love of ideological disputation from his years at City College of New York, where Alcove 1, the hang-out of Trotskyists and anti-Stalinist students, was the heart of his social life. The young radicals took their ideas, and those of their elders, very seriously. When James Burnham, then America’s leading Trotskyist theorist, spoke for only two hours during a two-day factional debate, the younger members considered him frivolous.

Kristol married soon after he left college. He spent a short time in Chicago, where his wife pursued graduate studies, before he was drafted into the Army. He saw combat in the European theater of World War II. “My wartime experience in Germany,” he recalled, had “the effect of dispelling any remnants of antiauthority sentiments ... that were cluttering up my mind. My fellow soldiers were too easily inclined to loot, to rape, and to shoot prisoners of war. Only army vigilance kept them in check.” He felt sympathy for the civilian population of the enemy nation: “observing German women and young girls, living among the rubble and selling their bodies for a few packs of cigarettes ... rid me of any anti-German feeling which, as a Jew, might otherwise have been present in me.” What’s more, “I was not so convinced that the American soldiers I knew were a different breed of humanity from their German counterparts.”

His career as public intellectual began

after his return from the war. First he wrote for *Commentary*, which he soon joined as an editor. In 1952, he scandalized the liberal intelligentsia by writing that Americans had good reason for supporting Sen. Joseph McCarthy's investigations. "There is one thing that the American people know about Senator McCarthy," he wrote, "he, like them, is unequivocally anti-Communist. About the spokesmen for American liberalism, they feel they know no such thing." The essay foreshadowed Kristol's next career move, which saw him become founding editor (with Stephen Spender) of *Encounter*, the London-based journal of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. *Encounter* and the Congress proved to be fronts for the CIA, intended to influence the European Left in a pro-American direction. When this became known years after Kristol had left *Encounter*, he denied having been aware of the agency's role—though one former CIA officer, Thomas W. Braden, referred in an apology in the *Saturday Evening Post* to "Another agent [who] became an editor of *Encounter*." Since neither Spender nor later editor Melvin Lasky fit the description provided by Braden, suspicion fell on Kristol. Had he been a CIA agent?

Encounter was the first of many journals Kristol would launch. In 1965, while working as an editor at Basic Books, he and his longtime friend Daniel Bell (another alumnus of Alcove 1) founded *The Public Interest*, a social-science quarterly for liberals disaffected with the Great Society. Twenty years later, Kristol and Australian political scientist Owen Harries debuted *The National Interest*, a journal with a foreign-policy emphasis to complement *The Public Interest's* domestic focus.

The Public Interest marked the beginning of the technocratic, policy-oriented strain of neoconservatism. But at the same time, another, ultimately more influential variant was gestating. "After 1965, our

dissidence accelerated into a barely disguised hostility ... as the 'counterculture' engulfed our universities and began to refashion our popular culture," Kristol wrote. "In 1972, the nomination of Senator George McGovern, an isolationist and a candidate of the New Left, signified that the Democratic party was not hospitable to any degree of neoconservatism."

Only part of Kristol's vision was directed toward reforming the welfare state. The greater part was a culture war against enemies branded as—and who sometimes were—perverts, cowards, and America-haters. Kristol understood his ideology as "bourgeois populism" charged with a mission "to explain to the American people why they are right, and to the intellectuals why they are wrong."

McGovern, of course, lost in a landslide to Nixon in 1972, and the New Left never came close to wielding political power. Subsequent Democratic presidents—Carter, Clinton, and now Obama—would prove as patriotically bellicose as ever Harry Truman or JFK had been. And while popular culture would never revert to the bourgeois morality that prevailed before the 1960s, its condition for good or ill had little to do with the political efforts of liberals or conservatives. Yet the culture war proved a highly effective vehicle for mobilizing new political constituencies—in the case of the GOP, most notably Evangelical Christians—and Kristol had picked what, from 1972 to 2004, was more often than not the winning side.

This was truly a new conservatism. "In economic and social policy, it feels no lingering hostility to the welfare state, nor does it accept it resignedly, as a necessary evil," Kristol wrote in *Reflections of a Neoconservative*. His ideology sought not to "dismantle the welfare state in the name of free-market economics but rather to reshape it so as to attach to it the *conservative* predispositions of the people."

The neoconservative approach to for-

eign policy was quite different from traditional conservatism as well:

Neoconservatism is not merely patriotic—that goes without saying—but nationalist. ... Neoconservatives believe ... that the goals of American foreign policy must go well beyond a narrow, too literal definition of "national security." It is the national interest of a world power, as this is defined by a sense of national destiny, that American foreign policy is about, not a myopic national security.

In the abstract, this creed is difficult to distinguish from Cold War liberalism. But it is not at all difficult to distinguish from the principles of a Russell Kirk or a Barry Goldwater. The triumph of neoconservatism meant the displacement of the old conservatism by a moderate liberalism that was conservative only in its attitude toward the counterculture. (And even there, the Old Right had more than a little in common with the New Left—Kirk felt some affinity for Paul Goodman and the bourgeois radical Eugene McCarthy; Goldwater's old speechwriter Karl Hess became a leading countercultural libertarian.)

Following Gerald Ford's defeat in 1976, Kristol came to believe "that the Republican party would have to become more than the party of a balanced budget if it was to be invigorated." He spent the 1976-77 academic year in residence at the American Enterprise Institute, where he discovered the economic formula he was searching for—supply-side—thanks to another AEI fellow, Jude Wanniski:

Jude had tried very hard to indoctrinate me in the virtues of this new economics, with partial success: I was not certain of its economic merits but quickly saw its political possibilities. To refocus Republi-

Continued on page 29

[The Israel Test by George Gilder]

Chosen People

How to atone for being a WASP

By Scott McConnell

MEASURED IN TERMS of military dominance, Israel has never been stronger. But Israel's campaigns against its Arab neighbors no longer receive the international applause they once did. Many Europeans consider Israel a regional bully. Even in the United States, a recent essay in the *New York Review of Books* argued that a state grounded in ethnicity is an anachronism, a throwback to the ethnonationalism that the West sought to transcend after World War II.

In the realm of soft power, Israel finds itself somewhat beleaguered, with its cultural and economic exports facing incipient boycotts and its military actions scrutinized and rigorously condemned by prestigious international jurists. Among gentiles, Israel's strongest support comes from Christian Zionists, but the country's more sophisticated enthusiasts recognize that Armageddonite eschatology is not a solid foundation from which to ensure Washington's unconditional backing.

To Zion's rescue comes George Gilder, veteran luminary of the American Right, author of a successful polemic against feminism and a Reagan-admired ode to the free market, and publisher of a newsletter touting technology stocks. *The Israel Test* is in many respects a crackpot work, but it is more original than most contemporary political best-sellers, and it is bold.

Some mainstream conservative magazines have dutifully reprinted excerpts, and a few right-wing bloggers have praised the book. Still, one senses hesi-

tation: is this an argument conventional Republicans really want to embrace?

Stripped to its basics, Gilder's book attempts to view the Arab-Israeli conflict through the prism of the scientific and racist thought influential in Europe and America in the first decades of the last century. By the 1920s, scientific racism was already facing intellectual resistance, perhaps most insistently from Catholics such as Hilaire Belloc, and its later association with Nazism eventually brought about its near complete demise. A generation before Hitler, Madison Grant, then scientific racism's most prominent American exponent, had been a friend of presidents and a stalwart of the Eastern establishment. He published *The Passing of the Great Race* in 1916 to wide readership and considerable acclaim. The "Nordics," claimed Grant, had given the world most of its explorers and leaders, the organizers of great endeavors. Indeed, it is not hard to imagine how an Anglo-Saxon might survey the world early in the last century, observe where its most fertile centers of economic, scientific, and technological innovation were located, and construct a plangent theory about endangered Nordic superiority.

George Gilder takes this template and recasts it, deploying group IQ data that didn't exist in Grant's time. For Gilder, the superior men are not Teutonic explorers or generals but Jewish scientists and financiers. He takes a brief tour through the birth of quantum physics, the Manhattan Project, and the computer revolution and

finds Jews central at every stage. It is indisputably the case that in proportions much greater than their share of the population, the leading scientists and mathematicians of the 20th century have been Jewish. Half of them? Probably not. Over a quarter? Almost certainly. No surprise then that America won the race to build the first atom bomb with a boost from Jewish refugee scientists from Central Europe or that the computer revolution took off in a region congenial to Jewish talent and innovation—that is, California.

Gilder takes these facts, which are neither novel nor very carefully explored, and grafts them to an argument about Israel, the Middle East, and America's broader conflict with the Muslim world. At the core of this struggle, he sets his "Israel test." Is one able to admire and embrace Jewish superiority and creativity, or does one, out of envy, oppose it? This is the examination we all must face. The Nazis failed, of course, and so, he says, have the Arabs. Gilder does not concede that the anti-Semites of the past century were more likely to dwell on the prevalence of Jews in the upper echelons of Bolshevism than in the physics lab. Yet the envy that he describes has often been an unacknowledged part of their complaint.

In transporting his "Israel test" to the contemporary Middle East, Gilder runs awry. To pass the test, one must accept propositions held almost solely on the far Right of the Israeli political spectrum. He argues that no accommodation

with Palestinians is desirable or possible. Those who suggest otherwise, even such robust friends of Israel as Thomas L. Friedman and *The Atlantic's* Jeffrey Goldberg, Gilder labels weak-kneed appeasers.

Though this book is leavened by cheer-leading for Israeli high-tech entrepreneurs and digressions into the theory of computers and the history of the Manhattan Project, the bulk consists of Gilder repeating the same argument: all opposition to Israel is rooted in anti-Semitism, a resentment among the masses for the brilliant and creative. Support for Israel is the only way to honor the Jews. Capitalism is the only social system that honors creativity and innovation. Hitler was an anti-capitalist, thus anything less than wholehearted support for the Likud and the Israeli parties to its right is rooted in envy, anti-Semitism, Nazism.

When addressing conditions in the Middle East, Gilder sinks to cartoonish agitprop. Palestinian leaders are “mostly Nazis.” “[W]ithout the presence of the Jews, there is no evidence the Palestinians would want these territories for a nation,” he writes. During Israel’s war of independence, “Palestinian Arabs fled, chiefly evicted or urged to flee by Arab leaders.” This catchphrase of Israeli propaganda, repeated a million times in the past 50 years, is designed to absolve Israel of any responsibility for Palestinian refugees—they did it to themselves. But it is contradicted by a powerful and growing historical literature, much of it based on Israeli military and government archives, which records Israel’s ethnic cleansing of Arabs from Palestine in 1948, including drawing up lists of Arab men who were to be seized and assassinated before the villagers were driven out. One can—and many Israelis do—debate the morality of these acts, central both to Israel’s founding and the sense among Palestinians of their own tragic history. Pretending they did not happen

cannot be the basis for a serious book.

Similarly fanciful is Gilder’s assertion, oft repeated, that Arab leaders claim “the right to banish or kill 5.5 million Jews.” He names no Arab leaders making this claim and would be hard put to do so. Is Gilder simply being mendacious? It’s hard to know.

By the book’s end, one senses the author’s exasperation. Gilder seems to know that most readers welcome Jewish excellence in the sciences. But what does that have to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict? It pains him that many brilliant Israeli innovators seem to want nothing more than to lead their lives and build their companies in Europe and the United States. A frantic tone creeps in: “We need Israel today as much as Israel needs us, as much as we needed Jewish physicists and chemists [for the Manhattan Project].”

Gilder never explains why, beyond misty paeans to the spirit of enterprise and capitalism and Jewish genius. (“Jews have known before the fatherhood of Abraham that it was the word that made the world—the ultimate assertion of algorithmic power.”)

But what kind of Israel does America “need”? The 9/11 Commission Report, stating the obvious, noted that American support for Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians is a prime theme of anti-American terrorist propaganda. Why should Americans support roads designated for Jews only and a web of checkpoints that strangles Palestinian life? The United States has strived with difficulty to overcome its own history of racial discrimination. Why should it embrace a stronger version in Israel? And the Israel of scientific advancement—not to mention the growing contingent of Israelis abroad—hardly needs the violent West Bank settlers to make a positive contribution to the world.

While there are other examples of authors writing books about the superiority of ethnic groups to which they do

not belong, they make up a small subset in the literature of ethnonationalism.

After thumbing through *The Israel Test*, blogger Matthew Yglesias speculated that Gilder may be a kind of WASP who “likes Israel in part because he wishes American Jews would leave him alone and go live there instead.” This interpretation strikes me as insufficient. Perhaps a better one can be derived from Gilder’s final chapter, in which he paints a portrait of his artistically and financially successful ancestors and the upper-class WASP world in which he was raised. The focal point is an incident that occurred when he was about 17. While trying to impress an older girl, his summer tutor in Greek, he blurted out something mildly anti-Semitic. The young woman dryly replied that she was in fact “a New York Jew.” Gilder was mortified. He relates that he has never quite gotten over the episode. It is the kind of thing a sensitive person might long remember. Variations on this pattern are not uncommon in affluent WASP circles to this day: guilt or embarrassment at some stupid but essentially trivial episode of social anti-Semitism serve as a spur for fervent embrace of Likud-style Zionism. Atonement. It would not be surprising if a similar process helped to shape George W. Bush’s mentality.

This sequence might be amusing if the real-life consequences were less sinister. It is now often acknowledged—if not widely regretted—that Palestinians have had to pay the price for Nazism and the Holocaust. It is they, after all, not the Germans, who are now stateless. But Gilder’s confession, and the book it animates, establishes a corollary to this truism: Palestinians are now required to pay not only for the crimes of the Nazis but for the genteel anti-Semitism of America’s fallen WASP elite. ■

Scott McConnell is The American Conservative's editor at large.

The Best Books You Haven't Read ...

David Bromwich Two stories by Elizabeth Bowen about wartime London have stayed with me since I read them 25 years ago. "Mysterious Kor" begins with a soldier, Arthur, and his girlfriend, Pepita, walking the streets: "Full moonlight drenched the city and searched it; there was not a niche left to stand in. ... London looked like the moon's capital—shallow, cratered, extinct." They talk, reflect, are exhilarated and strange to each other. Later, in her flat, Pepita falls asleep, and her roommate, Callie, talks to Arthur as he smokes a cigarette. These two conversations, the first dazed and mystified, the second hunched and matter-of-fact, are the story.

"Sunday Afternoon" is a sketch of a talk among old friends at an Irish house away from the war. (Ireland was neutral.) A younger member of the group, Henry Russel, has returned from London for a short visit. He dislikes the war, but is helping to fight it, working in a ministry, and his anecdotes, without meaning to, jar their leisure. Maria, teen-aged, follows Arthur to the bus. She wants to go to London, to be part of the risk and horror she has heard him describe.

They will turn you into a number, he says, but that is what she wants—to be one of the crowd, acting under necessity, anonymous. Both stories show the exposure and forced intimacy of persons thrown together by external crisis into a new kind of life.

David Bromwich teaches literature at Yale. He is the editor of a selection of Edmund Burke's speeches and letters, On Empire, Liberty, and Reform.

Nick Gillespie Is any major American writer fading faster than William Carlos Williams, who had the bum judgment to write a five-book epic poem about Paterson, New Jersey, of all godforsaken places? Williams is best remembered, if at all, for his "red wheel/barrow/glazed with rain/water" and his introduction to Allen Ginsberg's *Howl and Other Poems*, which is more than most poets, and certainly most Garden State loyalists such as myself, deserve.

But at least one Williams work deserves to be read by every American and every citizen of the world who aspires to be American or understand the place: 1925's *In the American Grain*, a wide-ranging collection of essays, fragments, and

prose poems that challenged and exploded the very idea of national identity. Eric the Red, Ponce de Leon, the French missionary Sebastian Rasles, the Indian princess Jacataqua—they are real Americans by Williams's count, as are Poe, Lincoln, and Aaron Burr, whose antinomianism infuses our historical experiment with its greatness, peril, and often self-defeating arrogance.

"They say, they say, they say," Williams's Burr utters near the end of his life. "Those two little words have done more harm than all others. Never use them ... never use them." Williams's meditation on what it meant to be living in the New World was written at the start of the American Century, but it continues to speak loud and clear to our current confusion over our place in the world.

NICK GILLESPIE is the editor in chief of Reason.tv and Reason.com.

Jeffrey Hart Sherwood Anderson has mostly disappeared from cultural memory, and it is not likely that the novels he wrote after his 1919 collection, *Winesburg, Ohio*, will emerge from oblivion. Hemingway's *Torrents of Spring* is a devastating parody of Anderson's *Dark Laughter*, and in *The Liberal Imagination*, Lionel Trilling attacked his novels' vaporous sentimentality. Sherwood Anderson's reputation faded.

Yet *Winesburg, Ohio* is well worth returning to. Its sketches of small-town life come forth with surprising freshness. The first, "The Book of the Grotesque," begins thus:

The Writer, an old man with a white mustache, had some difficulty in getting into bed. The windows of the house in which he lived were high and he wanted to look at the trees when he awoke in the morning. A carpenter came to fix the bed so that it would be on a level with the window.

Quite a fuss was made about the matter. The carpenter, who had been a soldier in the Civil War, came into the room to talk of building a platform for the purpose of raising the bed. The writer had cigars lying about and the carpenter smoked. ... The soldier got on the subject of the war...

No doubt about it, these sketches come to life on the page. And surprisingly, when we read Hemingway's *In Our Time*, an interrelated collection of stories and sketches, the influence of

Winesburg, Ohio is obvious, as Hemingway years later admitted to Archibald Macleish. *The Torrents of Spring* had been Hemingway's declaration of independence from Anderson and also a contract breaker with Liveright so that he could move to Scribner's and Maxwell Perkins, the great editor, for his next book, *The Sun Also Rises*.

Winesburg, Ohio is well worth a visit.

JEFFREY HART is professor emeritus of English at Dartmouth College and was a senior editor of *National Review*. His most recent book is *The Making of the American Conservative Mind*.

Jacob Heilbrunn John Wheeler-Bennett was surely one of the most remarkable British gentleman-scholars of the World War II era. His name appears in Saul Bellow's novel *Humboldt's Gift*: "Late at night Humboldt read military history and war memoirs. He knew Wheeler-Bennett, Chester Wilmot, Liddell Hart, Hitler's generals." Wheeler-Bennett was the real thing, someone who had spent much time living in Weimar Germany, where he traveled in the circles of the high Prussian aristocracy. Consequently, he knew the generals and political figures whose lives and careers he chronicled. Perhaps his best book was the formidably titled *The Nemesis of Power: The Germany Army in Politics, 1918-1945*, published in 1954.

No doubt it's been superseded in many areas by the latest scholarship. But what Wheeler-Bennett possesses, in contrast to many of his successors, is the ability to transform the corruption of the army by the Nazis into a beautifully written, tense drama, complete with majestic and convincing judgments about the individuals who speeded or tried to resist Germany's descent into totalitarianism. The army's early capitulation to Hitler is described as a "feast of osculation." The consternation of German conservative politicians at their bungled attempt to control Hitler: "the chief artificers of the coalition, Hugenberg and von Papen, the one evicted from the Cabinet altogether, the other relegated to the position of a gilded flunkey, stood in appalled contemplation of the spirits which their irresponsible action had conjured." And on the failure of the July 20, 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler: "And thus the day, which was to have heralded the downfall of the Nazi tyranny, closed with the opening of a new era of hideous and sadistic persecution." Once opened, Wheeler-Bennett's massive history is almost impossible to put down.

JACOB HEILBRUNN is author of *They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons* and a senior editor at *The National Interest*.

Florence King *Star Money* was published in 1950 when I was 14, and I've been re-reading it ever since. It's Kathleen Winsor's second novel. Her first was the 1944 blockbuster *Forever Amber*, about a 17th-century English vixen who climbed up a ladder of men until she reached the bed of Charles II. Winsor was only 26 when *Amber* came out and so breathtakingly beautiful that she could have played her own heroine in the movie that was soon made, but her combination of brains and beauty was too much for the insecure egos and febrile masculinity of the lit-crit set, so they let her have it.

They poked fun at her vivid, fast-paced writing, dismissed her meticulous historical research, and distorted her interviews to make her sound like a salacious idiot. They eagerly awaited her second novel so they could hurl more sadistic libel at her, but this time Winsor fired first. *Star Money* is about a Navy wife named Shireen Delaney who writes a best-selling historical novel while her husband is serving in World War II. It doesn't lack for sex—Shireen goes through men like a hot knife through butter—but it is first and foremost an exposé of the pseudo-sophisticated literary world and the envious snobs who run it.

Predictably, *Star Money* was panned by the critics—with one glorious exception. André Maurois, member of the French Academy, wrote, "This is a novel one cannot put down. ... the author's remarkable gift, her art, the realistic portrayal of her characters, the straight-forward frankness of her observation—all were not recognized as readily as they should have been by a Flaubert or a de Maupassant. ... But here is that one matchless quality: Truth."

FLORENCE KING is the author of 12 books, including *Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady*.

Michael Lind The best book about the future is one of the most obscure books ever written—*The Next Million Years*, published in 1953 by Charles Darwin's grandson, Charles Galton Darwin, who was a prominent physicist in his own right. Few forms of literature date as swiftly as the futurist tract, but half a century later, most of Darwin's arguments seem sound. Although he was related to Francis Galton, the prophet of eugenics, Darwin was skeptical that any regime could last long enough to breed specialized types of human beings or otherwise substantially modify human nature. On the contrary, he wrote, humans in something like their present form are likely to be around for at least a million years to come. Darwin argued that in the long run, Malthus will be vindicated; even if most societies adopt below-replacement birth rates, highly fecund minorities would soon become majorities and multiply to the limits set on population by technology and resources.

The younger Darwin's most fascinating argument is that lasting social change is brought about by what he calls "creeds," religious and secular, not by politics: "The intellectual adoption of a policy thus often hardly survives for more than a single generation, and this is too short a period for such a policy to overcome the tremendous effects of pure chance. But if the policy can arouse enough enthusiasm to be incorporated in a creed, then there is at least a prospect that it will continue for something like ten generations. ... That is why creeds are so tremendously important for the future; a creed gives the best *practical* hope that a policy will endure well beyond the life of its author, and so it gives the best practical hope that man can have for really controlling his future fate."

MICHAEL LIND, the Whitehead Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation, is the author of *The American Way of Strategy*.

John R. MacArthur I'm pretty tired of travel writing as a genre. My well-traveled wife likes to remind me that traveling to interesting places doesn't necessarily make for interesting people, and travel writers, including the professionals, aren't all that different from the norm. To get my attention, it's usually got to be heavy-duty reporting by world-famous writers such as Graham Greene or Ryszard Kapuscinski.

There's one exception. High on my best-books list is the most obscure travel book I know: *All the Time in the World* by Hugo Williams, the poet and "Freelance" columnist for the *Times Literary Supplement*. I've never met anyone who has heard of the book, and Williams never seems to refer to it.

In the early 1960s, he spent two years circling the globe using surface transport; the resulting narrative is a classic of youthful, unaffected observation, keenly felt and beautifully rendered. Who else but a good poet would dare begin a travel book with "Venice was cold and dark," then introduce a young woman who "hadn't at all liked Venice"? For her, "everything was so depressing and dull. Even the gondolas were painted black and everything had been shut up for the winter. Why couldn't they paint the river-boats yellow or something?" Fortunately, Williams is a good deal more cheerful and has a much better time.

JOHN R. MACARTHUR is president and publisher of Harper's.

Justin Raimondo Novelist, journalist, editor, and polemicist of the Old Right, Garet Garrett authored some 15 books. No more elegantly written and elegiac account of how we lost our freedom and gained

an empire exists than his three slender volumes on the rise of the welfare-warfare state. Published separately in pamphlet-sized editions by Caxton Printers some 60 years ago, they were reprinted in 2004 in a single volume entitled *Ex America*. The new title succinctly summarized Garrett's theme—that the triumph of the New Deal and the attack on Pearl Harbor robbed the country of its essential character, its historical reason for being: "There are those who still think they are holding the pass against a revolution that may be coming up the road. But they are gazing in the wrong direction. The revolution is behind them. It went by in the Night of Depression, singing songs to freedom."

So opens the first volume, *The Revolution Was*, written in 1938, which details the ways in which we lost our Old Republic to "your scientific revolutionary in spectacles" and became something else. The essay is narrated in his unique style, which somehow manages to combine the implacability of Cato the Elder with the prophetic precision of Cassandra.

Like all good writers, Garrett excelled at openings. Try this one on for size, the opening lines of *Rise of Empire*: "We have crossed the boundary that lies between Republic and Empire. If you ask when, the answer is that you cannot make a single stroke between day and night." Or consider the first line of "Ex America," the title essay of the 2004 volume: "The winds that blow our billions away return burdened with themes of scorn and dispraise." As Pakistan disdains the tripling of its foreign aid allotment as an attack on its sovereignty, this might have been written in 2009 instead of 1951.

JUSTIN RAIMONDO is the author of several books including the recently re-released *Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement*.

Alfred S. Regnery Book publishers know better than most that unheard-of books are a dime a dozen. But how about a never-heard-of biography of one of the best-known figures of 19th-century America who is now, himself, virtually unheard of?

When William Wirt died in 1834, Daniel Webster and Chief Justice John Marshall spoke in his honor in the U.S. Supreme Court. His funeral was attended by President Andrew Jackson; VP John Calhoun; John Quincy Adams, who gave a eulogy to a joint session of Congress; the Cabinet; and just about everybody who was anybody in Washington. William Wirt? Who was William Wirt?

He was the longest serving attorney general of the United States, serving under James Madison, James Monroe, and John Quincy Adams, and he still holds the record for cases argued before the Supreme Court. He was one of the prosecutors in the 1807 treason trial against Vice President Aaron Burr, was

widely known for his literary prowess, and turned down Thomas Jefferson's offer to be the first president of the University of Virginia. Few men have accomplished so much, and few who have done so much are so forgotten.

We regularly marvel at the genius of the founding fathers, but forget that there were a host of lesser-known figures whose contributions, if we knew them, would astound us. *Adopted Son: The Life, Wit, and Wisdom of William Wirt, 1772-1834* by Gregory Glassner (with a forward by Sen. Eugene McCarthy) is a very readable biography, and it is the only thing in print on Wirt. Were it were better known, Wirt might be as well.

ALFRED S. REGNERY is publisher of *The American Spectator*.

George Scialabba Few books I know begin as winningly as D.H. Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, a sequel to his not very well-received *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*:

I warn the generality of readers that the present book will seem to them only a rather more revolting mass of wordy nonsense than the last. I would warn the generality of critics to throw it in the wastepaper basket without more ado.

By and large, this is what the generality of critics have done since 1921, tossing also the rest of Lawrence's nonfiction, except the travel books and the essays on sex, pornography, and censorship. It is an understandable reaction: one is often hard put to believe that Lawrence means what he seems to be saying; it is more comfortable to mutter about the madness of genius, the striking intellectual eccentricity of so many great imaginative artists, etc. For the frail miner's son arraigned the whole proud edifice of modern thought.

Lawrence's unconscious is not Freud's. Freud's unconscious is a swamp, which psychoanalytic reason must drain and reclaim. Lawrence's Unconscious is a vital power: the ineffable source of life, a monarch ruling and subsuming the whole field of bodily planes, plexuses, and ganglions, completely individual but connected by quick, subtle threads to the entire cosmos. *Fantasia* is a pagan metaphysical psycho-physiology, at once primitive and post-modern, archaic and disillusioned, sardonic and incantatory. And though we scoff, Lawrence taunts us back: "Thin-minded [rationalists] cannot bear any appeal to their bowels of comprehension." To understand with our bowels and blood may be dangerous, but it is also, Lawrence argued more persuasively than anyone else, indispensable.

GEORGE SCIALABBA is the author of *Divided Mind* and *What Are Intellectuals Good For?*

Sam Tanenhaus At a time, lasting many years now, when American political debate is continually cheapened by the presumed (but false) conflict between "intellectuals" and "ordinary citizens"—as if the first category were not in fact a subset of the second—James Burnham, an architect of modern conservatism, once again commands our attention, principally for two books he wrote during his transit from Left to Right.

The Managerial Revolution (1941) is by far the better known, with its prediction, at times melodramatic, of a new era in which all the technological "super states," whether Communist, fascist, or democratic, will eventually resemble one another because each will have nurtured a leadership class of hidden policy intellectuals who wield more actual influence than the leaders they putatively serve.

But Burnham's sequel, *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (1943), is the more wide-ranging and rigorous work. It is a series of close readings, at times reiterations, of the vision of politics advanced by thinkers from Dante up through modern theorists (principally Mosca, Michels, and Pareto). Burnham makes the case, provocatively if not always convincingly, that even in an ideal democracy the crucial ideas are necessarily formulated by "elites," whose theories originate, in the best Machiavellian sense, in the understanding that "no theory, no promises, no morality, no amount of good will, no religion will restrain power."

SAM TANENHAUS is editor of the *New York Times Book Review*. His latest book is *The Death of Conservatism*.

Alexander Waugh Can I have three? The book that most altered my perception of things is called the *Chaldean Account of Genesis* by George Smith, published in 1876. I read it in my late teens because it was the only book in the spare room of a house in which I was staying. Smith, a Victorian archaeologist, unearthed thousands of stone tablets from a Chaldean library that dated back to the 5th century B.C. and found broken fragments that, pieced together, told the biblical story of Genesis in Babylonian form—a gripping tale that shattered a lot of youthful illusions.

Who's read *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* by Anthony Burgess, a tribute to Mozart written for his bicentenary in 1991? It's very short and at first glance dismally pretentious. Written partly in prose, partly in verse, and partly as film script, it offers a kaleidoscope of snatched carnival conversations between Mozart and other composers sitting in heaven. Underneath Burgess's surface smartarsery is a beamish little book of keen perception

and enlivened debate.

Then there's a smutty book called *Roget's Profanisaurus*, an offshoot of the English comic *Viz*, which describes itself as "Britain's leading toilet humour magazine." The *Profanisaurus* is essentially a dictionary of filthy words and idioms compiled with so much cleverness, wit, and complicated cross-referencing that the reader who consults it for one definition finds himself browsing indefinitely. *Profanisaurus* brings tears to my eyes and is honestly the funniest, most enlightening, and most enlightened book I know.

ALEXANDER WAUGH is the author of *Fathers and Sons: The Autobiography of a Family and, more recently, The House of Wittgenstein: A Family at War*.

Chilton Williamson Jr. *Travels in Arabia Deserta*

was first published by Cambridge University Press in 1888. Its author, Charles M. Doughty, an English Protestant trained as a geologist, suspected that the ruins of Medain Salih contained ancient inscriptions useful to biblical scholars. Disguised in Arab garb, he joined the Haj at Damascus on its way to Mecca and left the caravan at its closest approach to the ancient city. He found the ruins, but never the inscriptions.

Instead of returning to Damascus and England, Doughty spent the next two years in the late 1870s among the Bedouins as they traveled their seasonal *dira*, following their flocks on their transhumant course. Doughty made no secret of his faith as a *Nasrani* and refused to join his hosts in their daily obeisances to Mecca, an honesty for which he several times nearly paid with his life. Nevertheless, the tribesmen came to admire their guest. They invited him to remain with them and even offered their daughters in marriage as an inducement to stay.

Arabia Deserta is notable for the depth of its empathy for an almost impossibly foreign people and culture. Doughty was one of those artists on whom, as Henry James said, nothing is lost. The book is remarkable also for its literary style. Doughty believed that the English language had been in decline since the time of Spencer, and his own style is an astonishing imposition of Victorian prose upon England's literary golden age.

Travels in Arabia Deserta, which inspired T.E. Lawrence's work, is one of the great works of nonfiction in the English language. Cambridge should be commended for keeping the book in print for decades in a handsome paperback edition amounting to approximately 1,400 pages, published in two volumes.

CHILTON WILLIAMSON JR. is senior editor for books at *Chronicles* and the author of *The Conservative Bookshelf*.

Peter W. Wood Lewis Henry Morgan's *The American Beaver and His Works* (1868) is among those small, easily overlooked classics. It is what it sounds like: detailed observations on a bucktoothed rodent that devotes itself to hydraulic engineering. The writing is anything but fanciful. Morgan was a serious man with a scientific purpose. But his book grows and grows from mere external characteristics of beavers to a fugue on beaver dams and lodges, culminating in a chapter on "manifestations of the animal mind." He ultimately sees the beaver not just as a creature of instinct but as a "reasoning" animal. (So there, Aristotle!)

Morgan, though now largely forgotten, was a brilliant observer who can fairly be credited with inventing modern anthropology. His *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee Or Iroquois* (1851) was the first scientific ethnography. But he was also a businessman, and it was on a trip to Michigan to look at a railroad he had invested in that the industrious beaver caught his eye. Morgan doesn't indulge in explicit analogies or overarching metaphors, but it is impossible to read *The American Beaver* without sensing Morgan's celebration of America itself, embodied in this intelligent animal's restless, inventive urge to build.

PETER W. WOOD is executive director of the *National Association of Scholars* and author of *A Bee in the Mouth: Anger in America Now*.

Peregrine Worsthorpe

About 30 years ago, I gave a rave review to a book called *The London Dialogues*, which, in spite of most profoundly and originally addressing all the important issues of this or any other age—love, property, beauty, art, science, sex, equality, populism, race—has scarcely been read at all.

The trouble is that the author, David Hirst, did not so much contradict all the current intellectual fashions as rise above them, or rather look down upon them. The effect on me was like breathing fresh air—immensely bracing and refreshing if shockingly politically incorrect.

Hirst has subsequently published several more books that have also been largely ignored. For me, however, he is a bit of a genius, and it is my dream that in years to come his work will be discovered and appreciated, and I will be hailed—and you, too, dear reader—as among the first disciples to do this master justice.

PEREGRINE WORSTHORPE is a former editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*.

Shelf Life

Some buildings seem like dreams of the philosophers: the Chrysler Building, Chartres Cathedral. And then there is the dream-building, that great and final place

where the humanist can live forever bathed in the glory of Man.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Public Library of the District of Columbia is not it. In the dream-library, life is ordered and rational, with all human longings mapped like an international airport. In the real library, I walk in with a list of seven books that the online catalogue promised would be on the shelves, and I walk away with two. The other five are stolen or lost or misfiled. Take it like a Stoic: at least the metal detector no longer blocks the door, and the elevators less frequently smell like piss.

Wandering the dream-library would be like being set free in the card-catalogued coral brain of God. Wandering MLK is more like being trapped in the body of Falstaff.

Lemony Snicket described the dream-library thus: "If you feel, for instance, that well-read people are less likely to be evil, and a world full of people sitting quietly with good books in their hands is preferable to a world filled with schisms and sirens and other noisy and troublesome things, then every time you enter a library you might say to yourself, 'The world is quiet here,' as a sort of pledge proclaiming reading to be the greater good."

And Philip Roth, in a 1969 *New York Times* op-ed: "What trust it inspired—in both oneself and in systems—first to decode the catalogue card, then to make it through the corridors and stairwells into the open stacks, and there to discover, exactly where it was supposed to be, the desired book."

MLK is neither the dream of Reason nor its nightmare. In every reading room you can hear the throbbing bass of rock and hip-hop: the advent of earbuds brought new enforcers for the law of unintended consequences. MLK has displays up for National Crime Prevention Month, the International Day of Nonviolence, and Samuel Johnson's birthday. The computer tells me that the most popular checkout item is season one of "The Wire."

But even MLK is a home to hopes. A child coughs in the literature room, then tries an unformed word. A young woman in a purple scarf takes notes on college financial aid. Even silences are hopeful here: a man stares into space beneath the Confucius memorial, one hand supporting his exhausted head, the other on a stroller full of sleeping daughter.

The peace is broken by the frequent and seemingly random shrilling of the alarm: REET REET REET! The security guards pay it no mind.

I love libraries, though not for their order. I love them for their weirdness and surprise. I remember inspecting the dust jackets of every book in the children's room, reading from Joan Aiken down the black metal shelves to Jane Yolen. I never knew what kind of monster would be at the end of the next book.

Today at MLK, I find that some of the older books still exude the familiar library perfume—that dark smell, like whiskey made from fallen leaves. That smell seems to say, as it shudders up from yellowed pages, *This is how I smelled when you were young*. Even

when I was young I was too late for those mushy books, with their covert smell of lost innocence. *Pace* Emily Dickinson, there is no shipwreck like a book.

D.C.'s main public library is perfectly positioned, shelved between chic restaurants and hot-dog stands, the sloganeering "FAITH. WORKS. WONDERS." banners of Catholic Charities, and the garish cowboy riding his frozen bronco outside the National Portrait Gallery. MLK is nothing like the ideal library of the philosophers, but it's better than the city it serves. It is a place of quiet chaos, of resignation, of disappointment, of aspiration.

A little girl ahead of me in the line for the front desk tugs at her mother's hand, twisting urgently, her pink plastic barrettes clicking at the ends of her cornrows. "Mommy! Do you got any money?" she asks, pulling her mother toward the carts of books for sale. (These are mostly celebrity cancer memoirs, but I remember being her age and wanting *just to look*, too.)

"Girl! Where are your manners?"

The little girl thinks, stilled for a moment, and rephrases: "Do you *have* any money?"

Her mother and I cover our mouths so as not to laugh at her: so young and sincere, trying so hard to do right. We exchange companion smiles. Her mother pulls her close and cuddles her, while the girl wriggles and tries to figure out how she's managed to be simultaneously wrong enough for a laugh and right enough for a kiss.

MLK Public Library is more human than the humanists. ■

Eve Tushnet writes from Washington, D.C. Her blog is <http://eve-tushnet.blogspot.com/>.

Ayn Shrugged

Objectively speaking, Rand's opus is a literary disaster.

By Daniel Hannan

ONE OF THE UNLIKELY beneficiaries of the current financial crisis is the estate of Ayn Rand. Sales of *Atlas Shrugged*, her dystopian classic, have soared in the past year. The book has been solidly in the Amazon bestseller list and briefly edged into that of the *New York Times*. Not bad for a novel published in 1957. And especially impressive for a work that—viewed purely as literature—must be accounted a disastrous failure.

Pace, all you Randians: I am one of you. I have a small picture of the lady on my desk in the European Parliament, next to a signed photograph of Margaret Thatcher, a bust of Thomas Jefferson, and a silver medal from the Ludwig von Mises Institute. The most pleasing compliment paid to me as a politician was when some conservative students started selling a T-shirt with the slogan “Who is Dan Han?”—a reference to the famous opening line of Rand's *magnum opus*, “Who is John Galt?”

Rand was a visionary, and her critique of the corporatist order was eerily apt. She argued that her book was prophylactic: a portrayal of a future she wanted to avoid. In some ways, it worked. Very few people argue, nowadays, that economies should be run on the basis of state planning or that socialism is inevitable. In other ways, her analysis of the business-political order—the monopolistic instincts of industrialists, the favoring of back-room deals over open competition, the way party politics punishes integrity and promotes moral cowardice—is eternally true.

In the institutions of the European Union, which were designed by and for

bureaucrats and lobbyists, I see Randian scenes being played out every day. Conversations are conducted on the basis of unstated *ententes*, and directness is considered the height of bad taste. Slogans about the welfare of the citizen are trotted out without thought or meaning, while unspoken plots are hatched against the public weal.

Never mind the EU. Who can meet the directors of a mammoth multinational without thinking of Rand's description of a company board: “Men who, through the decades of their careers, had relied for their security on keeping their faces blank, their words inconclusive and their clothes impeccable”?

Yet there is no getting away from it: the book simply doesn't work as a novel. At this stage, I should insert a spoiler warning: the rest of this article will make no sense unless I give away what the book is about. Then again, as we shall see, one of the flaws of *Atlas Shrugged* is that it is poorly paced. You can see every twist in the plot coming hundreds of pages before you reach it.

Let's start with the most basic problem. *Atlas Shrugged* is too long. Way too long. Its point could have been very adequately made in 200 pages rather than the 1,168 of my Penguin edition. Now you might argue that some books need to be long. A novelist who sets out to create a plausible universe, and to people it with developed characters, must give himself room, be he Tolstoy or Tolkien. But there is nothing especially developed about the characters in *Atlas Shrugged*. They are all more or less interchangeable, speaking in dissertations and behaving in set patterns.

It's true that the reader travels a long way, morally and politically, between the covers. In the opening pages, we see the railroad chief executive, James Taggart, talking in cliché about the need to “do something for the people,” about there being “higher values than profit.” Toward the end, we see the destructive nihilism of those values. As Taggart hurls a Venetian vase against his wall, we are told,

He had bought that vase for the satisfaction of thinking of all the connoisseurs who could not afford it. Now he experienced the satisfaction of a revenge upon the centuries which had prized it—and the satisfaction of thinking that there were millions of desperate families, any one of whom could have lived for a year on the price of that vase.

That is not a journey on which the reader can be hurried. Had the author baldly stated, “People who talk about non-material virtue and the imperative of need are, in reality, death-cultists who are running away from their own moral emptiness,” the audience would have scoffed. So, yes, a certain amount of space is called for. But having given herself the room, Rand makes little use of it. Her argument is not so much developed as repeated in words that barely alter. It is as though she is trying to push her thesis into us with repeated hammer blows, falling in the same place and with unvaried force.

The novel lacks any sense of movement. We begin and end in a world where nothing works very well. Although there is some mention in the closing chapters

of food riots and social breakdown, there is little sense of continuous deterioration. Having at an early stage lost its productive people, the U.S. seems to manage to keep its radio and television networks going, its taxis running, its restaurants serving food. Only in the very final pages do the lights go out.

Nor do the characters develop. They fall into two categories: listless masses and men of action. Those in the former category mill about dully as an undifferentiated supporting cast. Those in the latter group also are interchangeable. Their faces are invariably made of “angular planes.” They speak “without inflection” or “without emotion.” They make up for this by having impossibly communicative eyes. Again and again, we come across absurd passages: “Francisco held his voice flat and steady, but he had the eyes of a man who had had an extra muffin at tea-time, knowing that he really shouldn’t have done, and was now resolved to go for a lengthy country walk, although he half suspected that he would end up pouring himself a generous cocktail when he got home, which would rather take the point out of the whole thing.”

P.G. Wodehouse manages such passages beautifully. Ayn Rand doesn’t. Indeed—again, there is no way of putting this without horrifying her legion of admirers—she isn’t much of a prose stylist. She is especially bad at dialogue, making no attempt at either realism or readability but letting her characters converse in philosophical treatises. Queen Victoria complained that her prime minister, W.E. Gladstone, addressed her as if she were a public meeting. The cast of *Atlas Shrugged* address each other in a series of essays.

Now you might say that my objection is silly. The book, after all, is a political tract presented in fictional form. But this shouldn’t mean it has to be hard to read. George Orwell, too, was primarily an essayist, and his two bestselling books,

Nineteen Eighty-Four and *Animal Farm*, were also political tracts presented as fiction. But both worked as fiction. Both were page-turners.

The same cannot be said of *Atlas Shrugged*. Apart from anything else, it is marred by small errors. I won’t list them all, since nothing is more tedious to the reader, but they range from irksome failures of research—Francisco d’Anconia is supposed to be descended from a conquistador, so why doesn’t he have a Spanish surname? And why did his ancestor go straight to Buenos Aires, which wasn’t founded until 1580?—to nagging incongruities of plot—if the U.S. is the country where all the productive people have withdrawn their labor, why does it remain solvent when the rest of the world has collapsed? These things are not deal-breakers, of course: follow the plot of, say, “King Lear,” and you’ll find plenty of inconsistencies. But all successful novels depend on pace, on maintaining tension.

And it is here that *Atlas Shrugged* most fails. Every twist and turn, every *deus ex machina*, is so ploddingly anticipated as to be robbed of dramatic impact: the identities of Dr. Stadler’s three students, the fate of the inventor of the engine, the name of the worker to whom Eddie Willers pours out his heart, the motives of the figure whom Dagny senses watching her in the shadows, the explanation for Francisco d’Anconia’s apparent hedonism. A friend of mine, a British MP, is on page 800 of *Atlas Shrugged* as I write. When I mentioned that I was drafting this article, he said, “Don’t tell me, you’ll ruin the plot.” Then he paused and said, “Actually, no, don’t worry: there isn’t a plot. It’s just a series of essays.”

Yes, it is, and therein lies its continuing appeal. Ask a committed Randian about the book, and he will quote one of the set-piece speeches just as a Shakespearean will quote a soliloquy. Neither is primarily interested in the narrative.

Even now, those essays come across

as uncompromising. But in 1957, when almost every intellectual was more or less statist, they must have been shocking. Editing the book to make it easier to read would have betrayed one of its chief arguments: that we must live according to our own code and not for the sake of others. The key passage, in this regard, comes from the composer Richard Halley. He abandoned his audience at the height of his success, he explains, because they had wanted him to succeed on their terms, not his. There speaks the authentic authorial voice. No editor would have approved the rough-hewn draft of *Atlas Shrugged*; all would have pleaded for excisions. But Rand wouldn’t compromise. If readers wanted to benefit from her work, they would have to meet her standards. If not, fine: she owed them nothing.

This creed is stated with a deliberate pitilessness, right up to the closing sentence: “He raised his hand and over the desolate earth he traced in space the sign of the dollar.” But Rand believed that any softening would be a concession to the values she loathed: cant, neediness, the elevation of mercy over justice, of the collective over the individual. In form as well as in content, she tried to give force to her ideals.

“My personal life,” she said, “is a postscript to my novels; it consists of the sentence ‘And I mean it.’” Yes, we believe you. That’s why, whatever its shortcomings as a novel, we still buy your book. That’s why you have influenced generations of undergraduates—in the U.S., at least, if not on my side of the Atlantic. And that’s why I pay you the highest tribute: if your ideas seem less *outré* now than when they were written, it is because of the influence of your *oeuvre*. ■

Daniel Hannan is a British Conservative Member of the European Parliament.

Tracking Tocqueville

God is dead, but my hair is perfect.

By Bernard-Henri Lévy

In 2006, leading French public intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy wowed us with American Vertigo, an account of his travels across the U.S. in the footsteps of Tocqueville. Here BHL gives TAC a preview of the sequel, Un Autre Voyage en Amérique, forthcoming in spring 2010.

EAST SAINT LOUIS, ILL.—There are many impoverished people in this wealthy land, and many of them seem to enjoy no access to even mediocre hair product, a delicious paradox that, at the risk of sounding arrogant, somehow failed to catch Tocqueville's notice. Yet no one, not even leading intellectuals like Sharon Stone, seems to notice.

MCLEAN, VA.—The Right. The American Right. In America, the Right does not play around. Today I meet Lewis "Scooter" Libby. A man of the Right. A true-blue "neoconservative." And though I expect to find a man quite different from me, I am struck by our similarities. He is obviously an idealist. He has a luxuriant mane of hair despite his age. He wears an elegant YSL white shirt and has the charming effrontery to wear it open-neck. He comes enveloped in a fragrance that, I am not embarrassed to say, is delicious and intriguing. Whenever I flick my hair out of my eyes with my left hand, he does the same—only with his right hand. And when I scratch myself fleetingly, he does the same, perhaps to put me at my ease. Or does this "neocon" mock me? Oh-ho, now I see. I am on to you, my dear Scooter. Congratulations. You and your hallway mirror have won the first round. *En garde.*

NEW YORK, N.Y.—While strolling through upper Manhattan in a precinct called Harlem, I see a man of African descent. In fact, more than one: several. Black people. In America. Why has no one ever noticed this before?

MCLEAN, VA.—When the real Scooter Libby leads me into his study for conversation, he is not the American right-winger I had expected. He does not pass me a snake and babble in tongues while firing a machine gun into the air. He does not burn a cross on a neighbor's lawn while petting at my groin. Not at all. In fact, he immediately impresses me with his courageous zeal to ensure the dignity of Afghan women by sending hundreds of thousands of young soldiers into their villages. And then, after bulldozing the villages to dust, he would rebuild them as low-rise condominiums modeled after graduate-student housing at the University of Chicago. Each cluster of buildings, he tells me, will have its own ice-skating rink, subterranean hydroponic ostrich farm, miniature Eiffel Tower (he is a Francophile, this neocon), interrogation facility, and Applebee's restaurant. There can be no doubt about the passion of this Scooter. His zeal for liberty. His plain good sense.

And yet, as a man of the Left, I cannot help but think of all the things that separate this man's views from my own. It's just that I cannot seem to think of them right now.

PORTLAND, ORE.—A sign in a Starbucks café: "No shoes. No shirt. No service." This totalitarian pseudo-syllo-

gism is repugnant to me.

Americans, heed the lessons of Sarajevo. Do not let this Stalinist dress code lead you into the Gulag. They shall not stifle our toes with boots nor even with Lycra. And so I remove my loafers and heave a foot onto the counter, wiggle my toes deliciously, knock over a painfully hot cup of tea, and hop out. There comes a time when responsible intellectuals must take a stand for liberal values, no matter the price.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA.—The mighty interstates have not just many McDonald's, but also an astonishing number of Burger Kings. Why has no one pointed this out before?

DEARBORN, MICH.—At a mosque, I am asked by a middle-aged woman at the entrance to remove my shoes. Can she be serious?

"Excuse me, dear Madame, but I prefer to keep my shoes on—both of them." Yet she asks again: "If you don't mind, hon, take them off."

Ah, but you see, I *do* mind. Islamofascism. Fascislamism. Take your pick. It can happen here. To my antitotalitarian friends in America, I can only say, keep your shoes on! Let us sit on the floor and clap our shoes together! Wear shoes on your hands! Or at least socks! Hang more shoes on your ears, perhaps the lightweight sandals called "flip-flops."

Oh no, my fascislamisttotalitarian friends, we are sorry to disappoint. I am afraid we must insist on wearing our shoes, in fact a whole panoply of footwear, at all hours, in all places. The

alternative, as the 20th century shows, is a path straight to the Gulag. A path trod with bare feet.

WEST LOS ANGELES, CALIF.—The Left. The American Left. Yes, I know it will irritate my American friends that I have gained access to the most prominent figures on the American Left—Eva Longoria, Shaquille O’Neal, Michael Walzer, even a coveted audience with the enigmatic grandson of Orville Redenbacher, whom we in certain *arrondissements* have long viewed as a sage—only to be dazzled by an actress who has yet to make her formal political debut. It should be plain by now whom I mean: Khloé Kardashian.

She is a captivating presence whose silence, one feels, masks unmatched political instincts. She fervently believes the Absolute has a place in politics—but *the Absolute is only another name for the ethical*. She would clearly not hesitate to send paratroopers into Lithuania to defend human rights and does not suffer from the pacifism so prevalent on the Left. Like me, she refuses on principle to wear a tie, or so I surmise by her assenting murmurs to my excited questions.

After a reflective silence, Khloé gives me a look of Zen blankness and inquires if I could “touch up” her highlights tomorrow afternoon instead of today. She asks her hulking factotum (name of “Jerry”) what happened to the Korean woman who did it before. Not for the first time I am baffled by the American sense of humor—is it an automatic, insecure response to crisis moments of intellect? I am led away somewhat briskly by this Jerry.

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO: A new shade of grey. *Ecstasy*. ■

—As told to Chase Madar

Chase Madar is a civil-rights lawyer in New York.

[An Artist in Treason: The Extraordinary Double Life of General James Wilkinson by Andro Linklater]

Founding Traitor

The treasonous, glamorous life of Agent 13

By Alan Pell Crawford

“SOME MEN ARE SORDID, some vain, some ambitious,” James Wilkinson wrote in 1787 in a secret memo meant for Spanish officials “To detect the prominent passion, to lay hold and to make the most of it is the most profound secret of political science.”

Some men, such as Wilkinson, are sordid, vain, *and* ambitious. Very few, however, are as brilliant as this reckless and dangerous man could be. People in his day just didn’t talk about “political science.” And if politics is science, then Wilkinson, as this thorough and thoroughly absorbing biography makes plain, was a scientist of a rare order—a mad scientist, perhaps, but a scientist nonetheless. He understood *realpolitik* as few Americans have. He detected the “prominent passions” of men, and he played on them with mind-boggling bravado.

Born in Maryland in 1757, Wilkinson joined the Continental Army, endearing himself to a string of higher-ups—Nathaniel Greene, Benedict Arnold, Horatio Gates—each of whom he would later “throw under the bus,” in contemporary parlance, as soon as it suited his purposes. By 1778, under Gates, Wilkinson was secretary to the Board of War, but here, as so often, he got ahead of himself. He became entangled in the so-called Conway Cabal, a conspiracy to replace Gen. George Washington, and was forced to resign. Yet the following year, with Washington’s approval, Wilkinson was appointed clothier general, though in 1781 he was forced out again, this time

amid allegations of corruption.

In 1784, seeking new outlets for his limitless energy and visions of great wealth, Wilkinson set out for Kentucky. It was there that he wrote his memo to the Spanish authorities. Hoping to gain a monopoly on American trade on the Mississippi, he signed a document “transferring [his] allegiance from the United States to his Catholic Majesty.” As part of the same plot, he became Agent 13, a “pensioned” spy for the Spanish crown.

This arrangement did not prove as lucrative as he had hoped. By 1791, he was back in the uniform of the Continentals—without severing ties with his Spanish handlers. From brigadier general, he rose in five years to become the nation’s ranking Army officer and, in 1805 to 1806, he served as governor of the Louisiana Territory.

Through the presidencies of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison, Wilkinson managed to make himself indispensable, even when evidence of his treachery was placed before their very eyes. He also managed, through it all, to render service to his Spanish paymasters. Under Jefferson, for example, he leaked word that the president was preparing to dispatch Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their expedition through lands still claimed by Spain. He urged Spanish authorities to “detach a sufficient body of chasseurs to intercept Captain Lewis and his party ... and force them to retire or take them prisoners.” Unaware, Jefferson rewarded Wilkinson for other services by

appointing him governor of Louisiana.

It was during this period that Wilkinson began conniving with Aaron Burr, with whom—not surprisingly—he discovered he had a good deal in common. Since moving to Kentucky, Wilkinson had engaged in efforts to persuade others to favor separation from Virginia and from the United States itself. Support for secession from Virginia was a popular position in Kentucky under the Articles of Confederation, in large part because Spain had prevented farmers from moving their crops down the Mississippi to New Orleans, and the weak government in Philadelphia had been unable to establish free trade down that vital waterway. But support for seceding from the Union was surprisingly popular, too, especially when drummed up by Wilkinson and others who, on the payroll of Spain, told Kentuckians they stood to gain more from Madrid than from Philadelphia.

As odd as this might sound today, what became known as the Spanish Conspiracy made perfect sense to lots of Anglo-American settlers in the Southwest. It also held appeal for narcissistic visionaries like Burr who, in the words of Anthony Merry, the British ambassador, wished “to effect a separation of the Western Part of the United States from that which lies between the Atlantick and the Mountains, in its whole extent.” Wilkinson seems to have entertained just such dreams himself and encouraged Burr in them, though to what extent remains unclear.

Burr’s plans changed through the years, of course, and no one really knows exactly what he intended to do at any given time. By 1803, however, when Spanish forces were massing along the disputed border of the Louisiana Purchase in present-day Texas, and U.S. troops were diverted to the west to counter them, Burr seems to have settled on seizing defenseless New Orleans in preparation for invading Mexico. With Wilkinson as

second-in-command, Burr envisioned an empire of his own, composed of much of Mexico as well as the territories of the American west.

Reports of this plot were, of course, making their way back to Washington, putting Agent 13 in a very sticky spot. Casting his lot with the United States rather than Spain, Wilkinson, in November 1806, fired off a letter to Jefferson, warning him of a “deep, dark and wide-spread conspiracy, embracing the young and the old, the democrat and the federalist, the native and the foreigner, the patriot of ’76 and the exotic of yesterday, the opulent and the needy,” and pledging to use “indefatigable industry, incessant vigilance and hardy courage” to defend New Orleans. This Wilkinson did in spades, declaring martial law and rounding up his political enemies, including, especially, those who knew how deep in this “dark and wide-spread conspiracy” he had been. Once again, Wilkinson betrayed one of his fellow sneaks, testifying against Burr before a grand jury.

“He never won a battle,” it was said of Wilkinson, “or lost a court-martial.” That he escaped hanging is remarkable, considering how diligently he seemed to court it. But for one vote, he would have been indicted in the Burr conspiracy, and he was court martialed twice, in 1811 in connection with his dealings with Spain and in 1815, after a failed attack on Montreal in the War of 1812. Wilkinson was also investigated by Congress on a variety of charges, most of them true, but he scraped by. Even so, volumes of damaging information about his dealings came to light and eventually, as might be expected, his reputation was ruined. He died in 1825, in Mexico City, having lived out his days as an influence peddler with less and less influence to sell.

This heavily researched and otherwise admirable book is not without its flaws: Aaron Burr was never “the Feder-

alist candidate for President,” nor was Virginia his “home state.” To his credit, Linklater does not labor to explain his subject’s devious character, though vague references to the role “psychology” played in Wilkinson’s lurid machinations rather beg the question. Probing the man’s peculiar mental processes would probably not have been fruitful. But a stronger exploration of the commercial and political realities of his time and place, which made it possible for Wilkinson to operate for as long as he did, could have been highly instructive.

The notion of “treason” could also have been better treated. To what authority can we fairly expect residents of the Kentucky District to have been undyingly loyal in 1788, when “patriots” North and South considered their states, and not the federal government, “my country”? What does it mean to accuse Wilkinson of treasonous activities in the 1780s when it was the Burr trial, almost a quarter of a century later, that defined the crime under American jurisprudence?

Linklater seems to argue that Wilkinson’s antics were possible as long as the country labored under a Jeffersonian “ideology” that viewed “standing armies” with suspicion. Corruption would be less likely under a “properly funded, professionally trained army,” with a “permanent general staff to take responsibility for military organization.” There would be “no place for General James Wilkinson in this modern age,” Linklater writes. He does not add that there would be plenty of room for scoundrels, opportunists, and conscienceless careerists of a different stripe.

There seems no doubt, from Linklater’s highly detailed reconstruction, that Wilkinson’s world had changed dramatically by the time he met his rather sad end in the suburbs of Mexico City. Once American settlers were free to move their crops down the Mississippi—a goal achieved under the Treaty of San

Lorenzo in 1795—any significant support for Western secession had died, though Wilkinson never seemed to realize this.

The old man failed to understand that a new nationalism was taking form, perhaps because he was incapable of comprehending loyalty of any kind. This development also eluded Burr, which is one reason his grandiose schemes also ended so dismally. “The certainty of the national frontier drawn by Andrew Ellcott on 1798, the pride on the sudden doubling of the U.S. landmass through the Louisiana Purchase, and the guarantee of property rights under U.S. law that each settler depended upon,” Linklater writes, “had created something new, a clear attachment to the nation.” Old arguments from the Whiskey Rebellion days were no longer persuasive. The more bound Americans became to their central government, the less likely they were to be won over by appeals to throw in with a foreign power or to risk everything on a gamble.

This “clear attachment to the nation” still gave plenty of scope to adventurers. One of these, who had also flirted with Burr in his early secessionist fantasies, was arguably more ambitious than Wilkinson and decidedly more effective in achieving his objectives. This was Andrew Jackson of Tennessee whose views reflected those of a new generation. By 1807, Jackson professed disgust with any actions designed to benefit the Spanish empire or that might threaten the American nation. “I would delight to see Mexico reduced,” Jackson said, “but I will die in the last ditch before I would yield a foot to the Dons or see the union disunited.” In due course, this devotion to the union would face serious internal threats of a different nature, though not for another half century. ■

Alan Pell Crawford is the author, most recently, of Twilight at Monticello: The Final Years of Thomas Jefferson.

Kristol

Continued from page 15

can conservative thought on the economics of growth rather than simply on the economics of stability seemed to me very promising. Republican economics was then in truth a dismal science, explaining to the populace, parent-like, why the good things in life that they wanted were all too expensive.

Kristol, who once titled an essay “Two Cheers for Capitalism,” was long considered too much of a free-marketeer by his critics on the Left and Right. But he was not free-market enough: the third cheer for capitalism, the component Kristol never acknowledged, should have been the theoretical side of economics, which demonstrates laws of exchange that no amount of political convenience can amend. For Kristol and other neoconservatives, unlimited, perpetual growth could be achieved if only taxes and interest rates were kept low. This too was a departure from the green-eyeshade of conservatism past. The upshot has been an explosion of national and private debt and a series of bubbles culminating in the crisis of the past two years.

Irving Kristol was an intelligent, reasonably decent man whose hysteria about the counterculture led him to champion policies that have crippled the dollar and given the country no-win wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But these policies rewarded Republican politicians for many years, and neoconservatism remains the acceptable face of the Right for the political and media establishment. For Democrats, Kristol’s ideology creates an enemy more similar to the party’s own liberalism than a traditional conservative opposition would be. By extension, neoconservatism affords Republican leaders with intellectual respectability in liberal

circles—something the party’s elite craves. The voting public, meanwhile, remains susceptible to neoconservatism’s cultural appeal. To the chagrin of traditional conservatives, Kristol’s vision of patriotism as “national greatness” or nationalism resonates with more voters than does the Chestertonian notion of patriotism as loyalty to place. In religion, the utilitarian, pandenominational approach of the neoconservatives—which blends religion with flag-waving and social meliorism—pleases the Evangelical base of the Republican Party much better than does the Latin Mass Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, and high Protestantism of the paleoconservatives.

Ironically, the populism of neoconservatism has over time destroyed the intellectual sophistication that drew Irving Kristol to politics in the first place. That his son, *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol, is Sarah Palin’s biggest booster is symptomatic of this decay. Neoconservatism has become a set of attitudes that might be summed up as, “somewhere, shaggy kids might be having sex or smoking dope—so let’s cut interest rates and invade Iraq!” The effect of this ideology upon American culture has not been redeeming, to say the least—indeed, some of the best work presently being done by Kristol’s epigones charts the continuing “proletarianization,” or downward cultural assimilation, of America’s lower classes. For neoconservatives, of course, the solution remains the mythical conservative welfare state. (See Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam’s *Grand New Party* for the latest iteration of this jackalope.)

Kristol was a fine writer often possessed of commonsensical ideas. But as the author of a new ideology of counter-radicalism, he was no conservative of any kind. ■

Daniel McCarthy is senior editor of The American Conservative.

Lives Less Ordinary

No one wants to read about writers diligently scribbling in lonely garrets. Bring on the addictions, the affairs.

By Sam Leith

"AH, SO YOU'RE THE FELLOW who thinks literary biography is a waste of time!" It was with these words, or words to this effect, that my neighbor at dinner hailed me the other night. I wouldn't have minded, normally. Indeed, I'd have been rather flattered that my name had meant anything at all to someone I'd never met. Except that in this case my neighbor was Michael Holroyd.

You know, Michael Holroyd? Author of a magisterial four-volume life of George Bernard Shaw and two magisterial volumes on Lytton Strachey? Author of a magisterial book on the art and craft of biography? President of the Royal Society of Literature, etc., etc.? Of all the luck. Actually, he was very charming, but it was a bit embarrassing. A couple of days previously, I had written an article for the *Evening Standard* in which it did look a bit like I was saying exactly that.

The piece followed a weekend in which sensational revelations about the private lives of writers had been sprouting like an outburst of Japanese knotweed from the pages of the Sunday papers. The origins of these stories were new biographical books, which were not in themselves sensationalist or silly. Quite the opposite, in fact. One was Paula Byrne's fine book on Evelyn Waugh, *Mad World*, which traced persuasively and with original research how *Brideshead Revisited* had grown in Waugh's imagination from his friendship with the Lygon family of Madresfield Court. One was Roland Chambers's *The*

Last Englishman, a well-written life, albeit an oddly-shaped one, of Arthur Ransome, author of the *Swallows and Amazons* series of children's books. (Asinine stuff, if you ask me, but beloved the world over.) Another was John Carey's authorized biography of the Nobel Laureate William Golding of *Lord of the Flies*, *The Spire*, and *The Inheritors* fame. This one I have yet to read, but Carey—chief book reviewer for the *Sunday Times* since the time in which *The Inheritors* was set and emeritus Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford—comes recommended.

Yet out of these subtle books had sprung, in rough order, the headlines that Evelyn Waugh had homosexual affairs at Oxford—this probably isn't news, technically, but newspapers have short memories—that Arthur Ransome had been a Russian spy (possible), and that William Golding had once made a ham-fisted attempt to rape a 14-year-old girl.

What this pointed to, I suggested, was that, high-minded though the endeavors of all these biographers were, from the point of view of their publishers they might as well have been at home whittling if they weren't able to unearth some secret shame that would make a biff-bang serialization in a Sunday newspaper.

This serialization is, to mangle metaphors horribly, at once cash cow and megaphone. If all goes well, it will earn a fee that—depending on the contract—will either directly defray the publisher's costs or do so indirectly by

supplementing the author's pitiable advance to a level on which he can live. And it will give the book a shout at being talked about and perhaps even bought.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this is getting to be an integral, necessary part of the deal. And the problem is that this serialization simply will not materialize if the writer lived what someone—was it Kingsley Amis?—once said would be the ideal life of any writer: "He sat at his desk and wrote."

The newspaper editor, presented with a manuscript, will leaf through page on page of a writer's lonely agonies in his study, his quiet fidelity to his wife, his accumulation of prizes and gongs, occasional disappointments, and the sunlit uplands of a late-career blossoming, before asking, "Where's the beef?"

"It's hard to avoid the conclusion," I wrote, "that a literary biography without a sex-Nazi, child-slavery, and/or hamster-rape angle is now dead in the water as a publishing proposition." Mr. Holroyd, who dabbles as little as he is able in the murky waters of sex-Nazis and hamster-rape, was understandably pained by this. But he was prepared to concede some of the point.

The shrinking market for serious, canonical biography is increasingly constrained—more in the UK than in the States, it should be admiringly noted—by the need for bankable scuttlebutt or pop-cultural razzle-dazzle. As the satirical magazine *Private Eye* recently joked, it can't be long before an official

biography of T.S. Eliot will be titled *The Man Who Wrote "Cats"* or Ted Hughes recast as "Poetry's Heathcliff."

When John Haffenden's magnificent two-volume biography of the great critic-poet William Empson came out three years ago, it was little noticed. It would barely have been covered at all—outside the literary pages, that is—had it not been for Empson's sexual eccentricities. Empson's private life as an adult was, it should be said, a pretty bizarre one. His beard—sprouting as it did from the neck rather than the chin and spreading over his chest like a hairy napkin—told its own story. The saving grace for Haffenden's publishers seems to have been Empson's perverse encouragement of his wife's infidelity and his attachment to troilism. The author of *Seven Types of Ambiguity* and some of the most beautiful, difficult, riddling, and influential poetry of the last century thus became Wacky Three-in-a-Bed Perv Prof.

Even so, Haffenden is an academic. His book was published by a university press. And it's hard to imagine it being commissioned today or it being possible for its author to have completed a work of two decades or more without the support of an institution.

But just as, for the purposes of the public prints, rock stars must "party" (i.e., ingest epic quantities of drugs) and pederasts must "smirk," literary intellectuals must feud bitterly with their rivals and display some form or other of romantic incontinence. As W.H. Auden put it, "To the man-in-the-street, who, I'm sorry to say, / Is a keen observer of life / the word Intellectual suggests straight away / a man who's untrue to his wife."

Ted Hughes—who fitted that definition of intellectual rather well—seems to be a case in point. A year or two ago, after his death, his publisher, Faber, approached the paper I then worked for, *The Daily Telegraph*, with an offer of a serialization deal for his *Letters*.

There were, as I understand it, personal reasons that they preferred not to go with our direct rival, *The Times*. There were bids, if memory serves, from *The Guardian* also. Anyway, we landed the gig, and much of that was down to their confidence that we would present the material tastefully. The Hughes estate had made the conscious decision in advance not to go with the middle-market tabloids that would have paid more money and reached more readers, but would have treated the material more sensationally.

Above all, Hughes's widow, Carol, thought it important that her late husband was presented in the round, with his achievements as a poet to the fore, rather than appearing once again as a sort of baleful prop in the ghoulish industry surrounding the death of his first wife, Sylvia Plath.

But there were competing interests at work. For, much as the Plath-Hughes material is only part of his story, it is a critical one in literary-historical as well as emotional terms. There is little question that the reputation of Ted Hughes,

tion over three installments. We ended up doing it chronologically, which fortunately also had the benefit of putting it in order of newsworthiness: you got Plath in the first chunk, Assia Wevill (the woman for whom Hughes left Plath and who subsequently herself committed suicide) in the second, and Hughes's laureateship and happy marriage to Carol in the third.

My old friend Craig Raine, who had known Hughes, wrote to me after the serialization came out, and was kind enough to say he thought I'd gotten the selection right. But what, he asked, happened to that early letter—the one Hughes wrote to Sylvia about the "aching erections" he got when thinking about her? Why hadn't I put that in? (The letter had been the jumping-off point for Craig's long review of the letters that was to appear subsequently in the *Times Literary Supplement*. He thought Hughes's priapism was central to the story and was somewhat occluded in the letters, self-excused by Hughes with a mixture of misdirection and astrological crackpottery.)

THE AUTHOR OF SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL POETRY OF THE LAST CENTURY BECAME WACKY THREE-IN-A-BED PERV PROF.

and both public and critical understanding of his work, has been substantially affected by the fuss about his private life. And as Faber and Carol Hughes both recognized, the average newspaper reader was going to be most interested in what the letters had to say about the relationship with Plath. That was, crudely, what we were paying for—it was what would sell newspapers, and what would in turn sell the book.

In consultation (through Faber) with Carol—who retained right of veto over what we did and did not use—I set about "gutting" the book for serializa-

The truth was, it was self-censorship. There was another love letter, I remember, that went in, similarly passionate but less overtly sexual. I had bottled out of putting the other one in for two reasons: first, I wasn't sure the sometimes school-marmish *Telegraph* would let me publish it; second, and above all, I feared the effects on Carol Hughes's goodwill of submitting that letter for the first week of our serialization. So I didn't even try. I can't pretend to know how she would have reacted. Though I had been led to assume the whole thing was a dance across eggshells, she had been

pragmatic and robust in the editing process, forbidding us the use of none of the letters I picked out.

At a party afterward, I was introduced to Carol and thanked her for her patience—considerable: I had made some daft mistakes that she unfussily corrected. She said something friendly. Then, a little shy and floundering for something to say, the following came out of my mouth. I think I meant it to sound light and wry and jokey, but it was so goonish and crass I still shudder to remember it. “Well, we were very lucky,” I chirped. “Your late husband led a life perfectly suited to three-part newspaper serialization.”

ANDREW WILSON’S RECENT LIFE OF **HAROLD ROBBINS**—ONE OF **THE MOST INEPT MAKERS OF SENTENCES THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN**—WAS A CORKING READ, PELION-UPON-OSSA OF **VULGARITY, DRUG-ABUSE, AND FAST LIVING**.

The ground should have opened right there. What was she supposed to say? “Yes, he’d be very pleased to know that. It’s what he was all about.” Or “two suicides and a laureateship—yes, very neat, I hadn’t thought of it that way. How clever of him.”

It was, in fact, true, though I shouldn’t have said it to his widow. The lives of the authors that commercial publishers want to publish, and that readers outside academia want to read, are the ones that are perfectly suited to a three-part newspaper serialization.

And good writers can make for bad biographies just as bad writers can make for good ones. A minor writer I admire is Ogden Nash. You know the guy—“Candy/ Is dandy/ But liquor/ Is quicker.” Googling him just now I came upon another delightful ditty I can’t resist sharing—a riposte to Dorothy Parker’s observation that men don’t make passes at girls who wear glasses:

“A girl who is bespectacled/ She may not get her nectacled/ But safety pins and bassinets/ Await the girl who fassinets.”

So I was very much looking forward to my task when, in 2005, I was asked by the *Spectator* to review Douglas Parker’s 2005 biography of Nash. If only I had known. Nash, you see, was a hardworking light versifier who sometimes lived in Baltimore and sometimes in New York, loved and remained faithful to his wife, wrote regularly for *The New Yorker* though he had occasional minor tiffs with them, and died at 68 leaving nobody with a bad word to say about him. Parker’s biography records all this with perfect competence—and golly

gosh is it a dull read, even at its restrained 300-odd pages. Nothing happened in the man’s life. It fails, in Nash’s coining, to fassinets.

By contrast, Andrew Wilson’s recent life of Harold Robbins—one of the most inept makers of sentences the world has ever seen—was a corking read, Pelion-upon-Ossa of vulgarity, drug-abuse, and fast living. Who wouldn’t rather read a biography of Robbins than of, say, solid old Wallace Stevens—even if *Harmonium* is better than *The Carpetbaggers*?

In the *Standard* piece mentioned above, I wrote, freely adapting Ernest Rutherford’s line that all science is either physics or stamp-collecting, that literary biography is either curtain-twitching or stamp collecting. My idea was to make the point that to deplore the sensationalist turn that literary biography has taken was to take on a pretense of high-mindedness that the endeavor didn’t really merit. The truly

high-minded position is to follow the New Critical piety commonplace since halfway through the last century: the work stands alone. Only a philistine would think Philip Larkin’s poems diminished by his racism and love of porn (“Onan The Librarian” read the best-ever headline of an article about Larkin) or Arthur Koestler’s essays diminished by his being a rapist.

Yet I don’t mean by that to pooh-poo the activity of literary biography. Is it not legitimate to take an entirely parallel interest in the writer’s life? Nobody can pretend it isn’t fascinating to know about the personal shortcomings of the writers we admire. In caricaturing biographical study as a combination of prurience and nerdiness, I don’t mean to say that these activities aren’t worthwhile. Personally, I love that sort of curtain-twitching and stamp collecting. We’d simply get on with such biographies better, I think, if we recognized them as such. When you decouple the quality of the work from the liveliness of the life, when you cease to insist with somber piety that it is somehow “important” to chronicle the lives of major writers, as opposed to merely interesting, the field is again wide open.

Instead of trying to find a major writer with a minor vice, biographers should seek minor writers with major vices—seek not to make the important interesting but to make the interesting important. The ideal subjects for literary biography, of course, are wonderfully good writers with catastrophically bad lives. Failing that, I’ll take a bad writer with a bad life over a good writer with a good life any day. But I’ll read a book about a good writer with a good life if it’s written by Michael Holroyd. ■

Sam Leith is a former literary editor of The Daily Telegraph. He now writes a weekly column for London’s Evening Standard.

[Hiding Man: A Biography of Donald Barthelme by Tracy Daugherty]

Postmodern Fogey

Maintaining traditionalist ties can be the ultimate countercultural act.

By Andrew McKie

FEW THINGS ARE MORE difficult to predict than the posthumous security of an artistic reputation. When, 20 years ago, Donald Barthelme died at the early age of 58, there seemed to be a solid foundation for enduring literary acclamation. He had been described by Salman Rushdie as “one of the essential figures of American literature” and by Malcolm Bradbury as “the best of the contemporary American short story writers.” In *The New Fiction*, he was called “the most imitated fictionist in the United States today.”

That word “fictionist” is a giveaway, as Gore Vidal noted in “American Plastic,” his celebrated attack on Roland Barthes, John Barth, and Barthelme in the *New York Review of Books* in 1976. But Barthelme’s appeal was never restricted to a narrow band of academic postmodernists. Despite his formal experimentalism, in his heyday he enjoyed a much wider audience than Barthes or Barth thanks to his regular appearances in *The New Yorker*. During the late 1970s, Fran Lebowitz, in a satirical piece imagining a writers’ strike, thought that any group holding back copies of the magazine would immediately find itself “fire-bombed by a radical organization that believes that Donald Barthelme belongs to the people.” Small wonder that Lisa Zeidner, who had been one of Barthelme’s colleagues when he taught at the University of Houston, could later write in the *New York Times*

Book Review that at the time of his death she had thought, “At least his literary reputation was assured. Or so I assumed.”

True, in the last decade of his life, Barthelme’s high-octane surrealist miniatures had become rather less fashionable. The flat, naturalistic, or hyper-realistic, minimalism of writers such as Raymond Carver began to supplant him in the billets he had previously occupied, notably *The New Yorker*. But Barthelme has had an evident influence on many writers now in vogue, as figures such as Dave Eggers, Jonathan Lethem, and the late David Foster Wallace have acknowledged. Nor is it just what one might call the McSweeney’s gang; Barthelme is still a frequent subject of scholarly papers. Comparison of his work with that of Borges, Calvino, and García Márquez is routine among academic critics, and Harold Bloom included *The Dead Father* and the collection *Forty Stories* (though, oddly, not *Sixty Stories*) in *The Western Canon*. Even so, Professor Zeidner was compelled to admit, “Among civilian readers, however, he does not seem to be much in circulation.”

“Civilian readers” is another telling phrase. Zeidner added, “I’ve been surprised by the number of literate people who have simply never read him, or confuse him with his brother Frederick. Even readers old enough to have worn bell-bottoms on the first go-round seem

to dismiss him as someone who was counterculture-cool in a quaint bygone era.”

In fact, as early as 1976, Hilton Kramer had launched a scathing attack on Barthelme’s work in the pages of *Commentary*, arguing, inter alia, that it was “the most sophisticated, because the most calculated and refined, expression of that hatred of the family that was a hallmark of the ideology of the counterculture of the 60s, and distinguished from other such expressions by allying itself with art, rather than with nature, in its search for innocence and escape.”

Hiding Man, Tracy Daugherty’s substantial new biography, unsurprisingly takes issue with this view and makes the case for the importance and value of Barthelme’s work, arguing with some success that it is more than an emblem of the 1960s. But only with some success because Daugherty can hardly pretend that his subject was not concerned with experimental forms—Barthelme’s work incorporated illustrations, graphics, collages made of pictures cut from 19th-century magazines—or that, notwithstanding his long relationship with *The New Yorker*, Barthelme was ever happy with the idea that he was part of the middle-class literary establishment.

The truth is that Barthelme, though he may now have fallen from fashion, was a modernist, even a revolutionary. But he had little to do with the “let it all hang

out” ethos of the counterculture. If there was anything in which he believed devoutly, it was culture, and high culture at that. His modernism was of the same sort as Eliot’s, Joyce’s, and Beckett’s, rooted—as Kramer had spotted—in tradition and art.

Daugherty, whose research into Barthelme’s childhood and early life is particularly impressive, makes much of the influence of his father, a modernist architect in Houston who believed in the transformative power of art to enrich the community. Donald Barthelme Sr. was also a perfectionist, and along with his idealism, he passed on to his son a tendency to be disappointed with results. What some took as nihilism or hatred of the established order in Barthelme’s stories is thus more accurately understood as an ingrained dissatisfaction with the world and with the ability of literature to find forms with which to understand and describe it.

In the opening lines of “The Rise of Capitalism,” Barthelme declares, “The first thing I did was make a mistake. I thought I had understood capitalism, but what I had done was assume an attitude—melancholy sadness—toward it. This attitude is not correct.” For “capitalism,” one could substitute “the human condition.” In “Critique de la Vie Quotidienne,” the same air of romantic regret persists. “Our evenings lack promise,” the narrator declares. “The world in the

evening seems fraught with the lack of promise, if you are a married man. There is nothing to do but go home and drink your nine drinks and forget about it.” Yet the dominant note in many of Barthelme’s stories is not quite hopelessness. Many, perhaps most, of them conclude with an upbeat note, a determination to carry on even if, as in that particular story, the consolation is inadequate or illusory: “And I, I have my J&B. The J&B company keeps manufacturing it, case after case, year in year out, and there is, I am told, no immediate danger of a dearth.”

This is not a cry for perpetual revolution or for the demolition of sexual norms. It is the authentic voice of the world-weary, middle-class, cultured, averagely sensual man who features in a hundred *New Yorker* cartoons, perched at the bar or slumped in his armchair at home with a martini at his elbow. I think of one such cartoon showing the latter image, with a young boy standing next to his father. The caption reads, “Not now, Matthew. This is Daddy’s quiet desperation time.”

On the publication of Barthelme’s first collection, *Come Back, Dr. Caligari*, in 1964, Granville Hicks in the *Saturday Review* declared, “Barthelme is a member of the advance guard, and he is very far out indeed.” That remained true of his style, but Barthelme was far from “far out” in the 1960s sense. “The body

of his work,” observes Daugherty, “with its humor, its delight in the everyday, suggests we’ll carry on—like angels, like Snow White’s little men, like the ordinary men and women we are—in search of new principles, with ‘the best will in the world!’” Or as Barthelme himself put it in an interview in the *Paris Review*, “The function of the advance guard in military terms is exactly that of the rear guard, to protect the main body, which translates as the status quo.” J.D. O’Hara countered, “Well, you’ve established yourself as an old fogey.” “So be it,” Barthelme replied.

Daugherty makes no bones about the fact that Barthelme’s personal life was messy: he was an alcoholic—though a highly functional one—and several marriages and affairs fell to pieces. There is, however, no evidence of the “hatred of the family” that Kramer identified in his work. At times, Barthelme conveys a feeling of constraint and disappointment reminiscent of Cyril Connolly’s remark about “the pram in the hall,” but he also gives remarkably tender portraits of family life, notably in stories such as “Chablis” and “The Baby.” Barthelme seems to have taken great delight in his own children and to have remained on remarkably good terms with all the women in his life. “His demeanor, especially with women, was polite and attentive,” Daugherty quotes Barthelme’s second wife as saying. “And he was a good listener.” His relations with his father, though marked with the occasional, unexceptional, degree of friction, seem to have been amiable, even tending toward hero-worship at times. Barthelme’s repeated examinations of the relationships between fathers and sons are a meditation on what is learned from the past and the obstacles our inheritance poses to forging our way in life, not a call for a metaphorical patricide of Western cultural norms.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications). Publication Title: The American Conservative. 2. Publication Number: 1540966X. 3. Filing Date: 9/28/09. 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly. 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12. 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$49.97. 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer): 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209; Contact Person, Ronald Burr; Telephone, 703-875-7600. 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher, Ron Unz, The American Conservative, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209; Editor, Scott McConnell, The American Conservative, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209; Managing Editor, Kara Hopkins, The American Conservative, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. 10. Owner: The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209; Ron Unz, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209; Scott McConnell, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box: None. 12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates): Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months. 13. Publication Title: The American Conservative. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 9/01/09. 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: Educational; a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run): Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 14,246; No. Copies Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date, 12,010; b. Paid Circulation (By mail and outside mail): (1). Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser’s proof copies, and exchange copies): Avg., 0; Last Issue, 0; (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS: Avg., 728; Last Issue, 729; (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): Avg., 0; Last Issue, 0; c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b 1, 2, 3, and 4): Avg., 9,257; Last Issue, 8,113; d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By mail and outside the mail): (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: Avg., 220; Last Issue, 6; (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541: Avg., 0; Last Issue, 0; (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail): Avg., 0; Last Issue, 0; (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): Avg., 1,234; Last Issue, 1,148; e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d 1, 2, 3, and 4): Avg., 1,454; Last Issue, 1,154; f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and e): Avg., 10,711; Last Issue, 9,267; g. Copies Not Distributed (See instructions to publishers #4, page 3): Avg., 3,535; Last Issue, 2,743; h. Total (Sum of 15f and g): Avg., 14,246; Last Issue, 12,010; i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100): Avg., 86; Last Issue, 88. 16. Publication of Statement of Ownership: Will be printed in the 12/01/09 issue of this publication. 17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Daniel McCarthy, Senior Editor; Date: 09/29/2009.

The best case for Barthelme's greatness as a writer, however, is that he provides that quality that so many obscurantist modernists conspicuously and, one suspects deliberately, avoid: pleasure for the reader. Even Gore Vidal, condemning his mannerisms and "infantile chic," admitted that he "does have a talent for, of all things in this era, writing." At the level of the sentence, there is a sureness of touch, a precision and elegance, a care for grammar, sense, effect and tone that make him, in particular, an extraordinary fluent parodist. He is also very funny.

Whence do these virtues spring? Daugherty spends much of his time describing the importance of Kierkegaard, Beckett, Freud, Kafka, modern art, and all the usual suspects. (As a teacher of creative writing, Barthelme drew up a famously intimidating reading list for his students, composed almost entirely of 20th-century modernists.) Yet he admitted, "style is not much a matter of choice" and maintained that the thrill of childhood reading never fades.

The best service of this biography is perhaps to have listed the influences of Barthelme's childhood education and reading: a traditional Catholic schooling that emphasized learning, discipline, and service, and a steady diet of S.J. Perelman, James Thurber, Damon Runyon, the Captain Blood stories of Raphael Sabatini, and the Rover Boys Series for Young Americans. Barthelme may be the dead father of many of today's literary young turks, but for all his cut-ups, surrealism, and devotion to modernism and high culture, his writing and sensibility were informed just as much by nostalgia, however melancholy, for altogether cheerier, homelier, and more innocent models. ■

Andrew McKie is a former editor of The Daily Telegraph's obituaries page.

Perpetual Feast

Hemingway's final book showcases his mastery.

By Taki Theodoracopulos

THIS SUMMER, Scribner released a "restored edition" of Hemingway's *Moveable Feast*. His grandson claims to have created "a truer representation of the book my grandfather intended to publish." He succeeds only in demonstrating that meddlesome heirs make lousy editors.

Young Sean Hemingway was piqued that the original version didn't cast his grandmother, Papa's second wife Pauline, in brightest light. He claims that Mary, Hemingway's fourth and final wife, spun the story to her own advantage after the great man's death. So he cut ten chapters and stitched scraps from other sources into a kinder conclusion.

"The more you read it, the more there will be," Papa promised. But this edition couldn't have been what he had in mind. For *A Moveable Feast*, with its merciless jabs and fond digressions, was very much the book he intended to publish. "If the reader prefers," Papa wrote in his preface, "this book may be regarded as fiction," but he didn't suggest that it was unfinished. According to Hemingway's close friend A.E. Hotchner, "The manuscript was not left in shards but was ready for publication. ... When I visited him in the Mayo Clinic a few months before his dementia led to his suicide, he was very concerned about his Paris book, and worried that it needed a final sentence, which it didn't." He says that there was no extra chapter created by Mary, as the vandals claimed in conferring their

own literary license.

I had been living in Paris for six years when *A Moveable Feast* was first published in 1964. I was 27 and in love with Hemingway's favorite city—"a mistress who always has new lovers." Reading his obituaries three years before, I had decided to follow the writing life, though I had failed English in school and, according to my father, was incapable of writing a coherent letter asking for money. Obituaries have a tendency to concentrate the mind. Here was a man who traveled the globe, covered wars, wrote about whatever captured his fancy, pursued women in the flesh spots of the Western world, hunted big game in Africa—and had a ten-page obituary in *Time* after he had blown his brains out. It was time to forget about tennis and hit the typewriter.

Well, as some of you may surmise, I never rivaled the master. But one thing is certain: Hemingway's prose and personal heroics have inspired more young people to try their hands at writing than the Beatles, Rolling Stones, and Elvis got callow types to try making a living at rock and roll. Hemingway was the first literary superstar, and I include Lord Byron, more infamous for his sexual shenanigans than his romantic poetry, the latter only read by a few elite.

A Moveable Feast, his ode to the community of expat writers making their home in 1920s Paris, was an instant bestseller. It was as good as anything Hemingway produced—and he knew it. "After writing a story I was

always empty and both sad and happy, as though I had made love," he wrote, "and I was sure this was a very good story although I would not know truly how good until I read it over the next day."

I am now almost 12 years older than Papa was when he died and have had many occasions to revisit the *Feast*. The beauty of the prose and the sharpness of his observations are still extraordinary, especially today, what with phonies such as Martin Amis and Salman Rushdie polluting a once honorable profession. The control the writer has over his subjects is undeniable. Thankfully, the new version still describes Gertrude Stein as looking like a Roman emperor, which is fine if you like your women that way, and Wyndham Lewis still has "the face of an unsuccessful rapist."

The tragic but great Fitzgerald is still here, as is Ezra Pound. I remember, when first reading *Feast*, taking the girl that I would one day marry to the Closerie des Lilas and repeating the conversation Papa had with Ford Madox

Ford at the table next to ours, according to the waiter.

"What is a cad?" asks Hemingway.

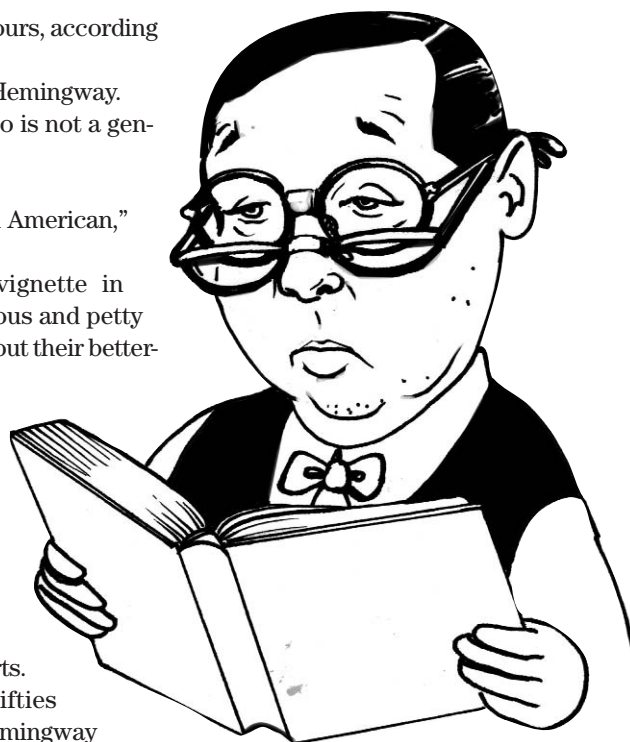
"A cad is someone who is not a gentleman," says Ford.

"Is Ezra a gentleman?"

"Of course not, he's an American," answers the Brit.

Papa included this vignette in order to show how envious and petty English people can be about their better-off colonials. It's real Hemingway, full of heart but also subtle.

When I read that Ezra and Papa used to play tennis every morning near Boulevard St. Germain, I went looking. An apartment building had replaced the courts. Still, Paris during the Fifties and Sixties smelled of Hemingway heroes and heroines, and I can't count the nights I spent in Jimmy's and La Coupole posing as a Papa man. The Paris Ritz, reputed to have been liberated by him from the Germans, is still



called the Hemingway Bar (pronounced "Emingway" by the Frogs). Papa's public image as a deep-sea fisherman, big-game hunter, and war correspondent tended to obscure his lifelong dedication to the art of writing. But his commitment to the pen was total, and it cost him his life. He killed himself because he could no longer excel at writing, the booze, the head accidents, and the manic depression having taken their toll. When one is as committed to one's craft as he was, second best will not do. And he had begun to talk about his art, something he had always insisted brought bad luck.

"All stories end in death," he wrote, "and he is no true storyteller who would keep that from you." We will all die one day, but few us leave such great stuff behind. Best to leave it well enough alone. ■

Taki Theodoracopulos is a TAC founding editor.

**Subscribe to
The American Conservative
Today.**

Simply go to
www.amconmag.com
and click "Subscribe"
or call

1-800-579-6148



Turning the Pixels

Will Kindle replace books? Don't bet on it.

By Helen Rittelmeyer

THERE IS NO SHAME in owning a Kindle. Literally. Ink-and-paper books can be embarrassing. No one wants to be caught red-handed with *The Debutante Divorcée*. To get away with reading Gadamer in public would require dressing up like a college professor. And no one, not even a college professor, has enough credibility to read *Finnegan's Wake* in broad daylight.

For \$259, readers can finally have a little privacy. Books are delivered wirelessly, eliminating clerks from the equation—the Kindle Store will not roll its eyes at you for buying a lowbrow best-seller. And Kindle's unchanging exterior won't betray your reading material to the rest of the coffee shop. No wonder Harlequin romances are big sellers.

Kindle is the same size as a book, pages are the same gray as paper, and, for the limited number of titles available in digital format, a Kindle book is cheaper than a paperback. These are welcome developments. But when the old-fashioned codex goes, venerable reading traditions will go with it. What will be lost if readers make the switch to e-books?

Bookshelves are clearly out. Frankly, their demise should be a relief – they were always a poser's medium. Bookish types like to scrutinize the shelves when they're in someone's home for the first time, but the smart ones know not to trust their impressions; it's easier to buy a book than to read one. Often, the most impressive books on a man's shelves are the ones he only pretended to read in college. And women, stand warned: not every man who displays Jane Austen is as sensitive as he would like you to infer.

There's nothing wrong with signaling, and certainly nothing wrong with men who will admit to reading Austen, but Kindle forces people to signal which books they've read the same way they broadcast movies they've seen—by talking intelligently about them. Surely this is an improvement on the old system.

Marginalia is another of the digital revolution's overrated casualties. Writing in the margins of a Kindle book is technically possible but inconvenient: the QWERTY keyboard is tiny, and it is difficult to insert punctuation. Then again, are notes that look like text messages really worse than most handwritten notes? Wasn't it always a lot of "Yes, very true" and "What nonsense"? Most marginalia sounds so insipid upon rereading that annotated books are often too embarrassing to lend.

Not that anyone will loan should e-books take over, which is one tradition that it will be sad to see Kindle kill. Lending your friend a book is a gift. Telling him he ought to get himself a copy is a task. Buying him a copy for his Kindle is even worse, an imposition that forces him to read the book or feel like he's wasted your money. For serious occasions, the kind that call for a long and heartfelt inscription inside the front cover, books will still be around. But casual, spur-of-the-moment, I-happen-to-have-it-in-my-purse-right-now lending will be out.

Kindle lacks the heft of a book—at pencil-width, the device is almost flimsy—and, unless scratch-and-sniff technology improves, it will continue to lack the smell of musty old pages. Nor is it a patch on the old-fashioned broadsheet when it

comes to the morning newspaper: it's hard to imagine being informed about a headless body in a topless bar in 12-point type. But aside from these sentimental attachments, Kindle is a perfectly adequate substitute for paper. It does not have the eyeball-frying glare of a computer screen, nor does it require nearly as much set-up as most digital toys.

It will not force any revolutionary changes in the way people read; this is not the iPod of publishing. MP3 players were revolutionary. They killed the album, which is quite a scalp for a little plastic device to collect. No longer must songwriters churn out the 40 minutes of filler that come after a single. There are trade-offs to this transition—the hidden track, the concept album, Storm Thorgerson cover art—but there will be no turning back. Kindle isn't analogous to the shift from albums to single songs because, though readers' attention spans have dwindled since any golden decade you want to name, that hasn't made books bite-sized, just bubblegum-flavored. And it's hard to imagine how Kindle could make that problem better or worse.

So Kindle is a not a disaster, either for Western civilization or for one's own reading life. Neither is it an absolute boon. The ability to carry 1,500 books in a purse is impressive, but that won't make people read faster or better. The complete works of James Joyce can be downloaded for just \$9.99, but the truth is, if you were going to read *Finnegan's Wake*, you would have done it already. ■

Helen Rittelmeyer is an editorial assistant at The American Conservative.

[Trotsky: A Biography by Robert Service]

The Ice Pick Cometh

A new biography of Trotsky avoids the romanticism of earlier chroniclers and is poorer for it.

By Norman Stone

HAS ANYONE NOWADAYS heard of Isaac Deutscher? He was a Polish (Jewish) Communist who, in the later 1930s, had the prudence to go not to the Soviet Union, where he would no doubt have been liquidated along with the rest of the Polish Communist Party, but to England. There, he was looked after by David Astor, the great editor of *The Observer*, and wrote sympathetically about communism. He was not a Stalinist and instead advertised himself as a Trotskyist of sorts. Lev Trotsky had, of course, been Stalin's great rival who lost the battle for Lenin's succession, was expelled from the Party in 1927, then was thrown out of the country in 1929. Later, Stalin went on a killing spree of his old rivals and associates, but Trotsky had been too big a figure, so he was prudently packed off to Turkey. He stayed there for four years before ending up in revolutionary Mexico, where Stalin's assassin reached him in 1940.

Trotsky has left a legend of permanent revolution, without the "shiny-bot-tomed bureaucrats and gun-men" whom George Orwell associated with Stalin. He was a sort of Che before his time and would no doubt today adorn a T-shirt or two, except that in looks he was beard-waggingly professorial. So was Deutscher.

His three-volume *Trotsky*, probably not now much read, was greatly admired by Graham Greene, who wrote,

"surely this must be counted among the greatest biographies in the English language." Writers are generally rather bad on politics: someone misinformed them that they were the unacknowledged legislators of mankind; you are better off listening to the taxi driver.

Deutscher could certainly craft a paragraph. His Trotsky comes across as a romantic revolutionary, all barricades and liberation. As such, he had something of a vogue in the 1960s. Deutscher, by 1966 an old warhorse, was invited to give some temper-of-the-times lectures at Cambridge and delivered himself of "The Unfinished Revolution," which went down quite well—students crowded round, saying, "Professor, that was a wonderful lecture," and were told, "Yes, I thought so, too."

Trotsky certainly had some interesting and influential allies in the West because they saw in him that socialism with a human face that resurfaced with Gorbachev in the 1980s. Besides, Trotsky's was quite a life. Robert Service's new book about him is a diligent work, but quite early on you guess that, unlike Trotsky's more admiring biographers, he cannot quite wait for the ice pick. Service has written before on Lenin and Stalin and knows his way around the archives that have become available in Moscow—though, as happens so often with these allegedly revelatory archives, I am not sure that they add much.

Trotsky was born in 1879, and his formative experience was that turn of the century when so many bright people looked forward to the shock of the new in a 20th century that was obviously going to be dominated by the machine. The first aircraft lifts off; the first skyscraper goes up and up; one Tsiolkovsky in provincial Russia concocts the equations that will, 50-odd years later, lift a satellite into space; Picasso, Freud, and Schoenberg are breaking up the eye, the soul, and the tune; new political parties emerge, with congresses of a few dozen people—Russian Communists, then called Bolsheviks, in 1903, Italian Fascists-to-be, even the Young Turks, who will construct modern Turkey out of the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire.

Young Trotsky, his father a well-off Jewish farmer in what is now southern Ukraine, picked up the new socialist ideas. When still a schoolboy in Odessa, he was arrested for sedition. Prison, Siberia, and escape followed, then exile in the West, whether in Switzerland or Vienna, where Trotsky felt most at home. He met Lenin, and they got on well, although Trotsky did not much like Lenin's dogmatic ways or his insistence on training Party membership to obey the orders of the Central Committee. Lenin endlessly fussed about details, trying to control everything about the Bolsheviks—their finances mattered to him (apparently he was good at fixing

marriages with rich girls as well as bank-robberies), as did their voting behavior in the Russian sort-of parliament and who wrote what article in which style. Here, Trotsky came into his own: he could write. In those days, you made a lot of money at that. Prime Minister Gladstone's animadversions as to papal infallibility, Bulgarian horrors, etc. sold in the hundreds of thousands and made him rich. Lenin was a very boring, plodding writer—poor old Soviet citizens, compulsorily having to plough through the stuff—and Trotsky was not.

Service does not make nearly enough of the articles, but I happen to have on my shelves Trotsky's essays on the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, and he is unput-downably good. Here are these Balkan peasants, pushed into war with each other—Serbs and Bulgarians, lacking a native aristocracy, egalitarian, egged on into cruelty by gruesome priests and professors, Rumanians pushed into battle by henna-eyed colonels wittering in French, with some hired Hohenzollern as king. Trotsky detested tin-pot nationalism because he had seen the horrible results with his own eyes. In Istanbul, after the Turks' defeat, there were hundreds and hundreds of thousands of refugees, old men parked philosophically on oxcarts, pregnant women waddling alongside, small children dying of typhus and cholera, and, back home, a set of burned villages and the corpses of any male over the age of 12. In the great Hagia Sophia church and its precincts, there were 10,000 refugees, a foretaste of what was to come for the Armenians. Later, the Bolsheviks won their Civil War not only because Trotsky was a superb (and very harsh) organizer of the Red Army but because they won the support of peoples for whom the Whites had no time—Ukrainians, assorted Muslim "Toilers of the East," and even Chechens.

What did most to wreck Trotsky in

Russia was that he did not like the place. People from the Communist International, the Comintern, probably did mutter to each other in the Hotel Lux, now operating as "Tsentralnaya" in the Tverskaya (once "Gorky") Street leading down to Red Square—the restaurant still has the gilded *Jugendstil* caryatids of yore—that the problem with the Russians was that they were a bit crude and drank too much. In the end, Trotsky thought that Russia had by chance become the launching pad for a revolution in a more important country, Germany. It was a terrible mistake. The Comintern did indeed send its agents to Germany to foment revolution, and—Service misses this—set up the first Popular Front regime in Saxony in 1923. The preposterous Béla Kun from Hungary read out inflammatory stuff in that awful Magyar accent in German, in the rain, in Dresden, and the uninspired workers went away. The Comintern challenge did excite a response in Bavaria, however: Hitler's. Three weeks later, Hitler took up an alliance with the German Right and launched the coup in Munich, which eventually made him a national figure. The sheer silliness and vanity of the Left realized its own nightmare. Ten years on, the Comintern made the same absurd blunders. The German Communist Party could have kept a non-Nazi government in office in 1932. Instead, it voted against, and decent Social Democrats and Catholics—the makers of subsequent West Germany—lost power to a silly ass, Papen, who thought that he could touch Hitler and not be defiled. True, the Communist strategy worked in the end: 50 million corpses later, there was an East German People's Democracy.

In other words, Trotsky caused Fascism. If you look into the earlier revolutions of 1848, again the real story is the stupidity of the Left, the way in which it provoked opponents into alliance. That

same theme was displayed in the Chile of Pinochet. Niall Ferguson, like Service an old student of mine, wrote the superb *Ascent of Money* (not a well chosen title) in which he explained, hesitantly, that Allende had made a royal mess of things, more or less inviting Pinochet to take over. As coups go, Pinochet's was bloodless, but the Chilean Left never forgave him and to this day harasses his family. Coups in the Argentine or Brazil, let alone Spain, were far worse and were also, on the whole, pointless, whereas Chile went on to become the model state for Latin America. Professor Ferguson told me at the World Bank summit in Istanbul recently that he has had to put on his tin hat for saying this.

Trotsky had his moment in history in the Russian Revolution and the Civil War. It was, someone said, Jewish brains, Latvian rifles, and Russian fools. Trotsky was a superb orator—quite early on he had read Schopenhauer on



rhetoric, which goes onto my reading list—and went around the country in his armored train galvanizing the fools. He was mightily helped by the foolishness of his opponents. The Western powers, fighting the First World War in the name of whatever was then the equivalent of free markets and democracy, were planning to take over the Middle East. Trotsky just published the treaties.

There is one element in this story that nobody has ever written: you can only get at it through stray references on the Internet and in Turkish press articles here and there. Trotsky, it is well known, went to Turkey in 1929. We still do not know why the Turks took him in, but concurrently, they were given two factories by the Soviet Union, one making textiles in Kayseri, the biblical Caesarea

Orwell in *Animal Farm* got all of this absolutely right.

You feel at the end of Robert Service's book that he murders Trotsky with anticlimactic relief. He certainly misses the tricks that he might have taken with the finale. The Trotsky story closes in the Mexico of Graham Greene's *Power and the Glory*. The Party of Institutional—is that the Mexican for “permanent”?—Revolution was looking after him. To penetrate the well-guarded Trotsky household, Stalin's assassins recruited a very handsome Catalan Communist with a rich background, Ramon Mercader. He was instructed to make up to a girl of the household, Silvia. He did so with seducer's ingenuity, in small, barely noticeable, increments—picking up a dropped something, helping with a shopping bag, bunches of flowers, until, finally trusted, he was allowed into the small fortress at Coyoacan. Could he consult the master on a difficult dialectical point? Yes, yes. The master bent over the manuscript. The ice axe, sawn off so as to fit into Mercader's pocket, bit into Trotsky's brain. (In the film of this, Alain Delon was cast as Trotsky, quite absurdly: he would have been absolutely right for Mercader, when younger, and Burt Lancaster would have been absolutely right as Trotsky.)

The killing of Trotsky was an extraordinary revelation of Stalin's character, that endless vengefulness and hatred of a rival who in many ways was far better than him. Trotsky despised Russia: “icons and cockroaches,” he said. Stalin, a Georgian, was more astute. Modern Russia, Putin and all, is much better off without the lot of them. Trotsky, in death, said more about communism than anything in his life. ■

Norman Stone is head of the department of International Relations at Bilkent University, Ankara. His latest book is World War One: A Short History.

WHEN THE BOLSHEVIKS WON, THE SUCCESS WENT TO TROTSKY'S HEAD. HE PROBABLY BELIEVED WHAT AN AMERICAN SAID OF HIM, THAT HE WAS THE GREATEST JEW SINCE JESUS CHRIST.

When the Bolsheviks won, the success went to Trotsky's head. He probably believed what an American said of him, that he was the greatest Jew since Jesus Christ. The only man who could really control him was Lenin. Quite why and how, who knows? Service cannot explain. Lenin, whether on the page or on film, comes across as a prodigious bore. Yet as he disappeared by stages, with strokes after 1922, you can see the creativity draining out of Trotsky. He was no good with ordinary people—prim, non-drinking, non-smoking, non-swearing. He even refashioned his Ukrainian accent, which Gorby used to aplomb in his time, into a variant of educated Moscow. The peasant thugs who came up in the Party under Stalin's aegis did not like him. They did not see why Russians should be used as cannon fodder for a revolution in Germany or China or wherever. Trotsky lost battles and was thrown out. But was he really an alternative to Stalin? He hated peasants and maybe would have killed many more than Stalin. Like Lenin, he did not hesitate to wipe out people—or for that matter peoples. “Permanent revolution” means nothing unless it refers to Marx turning in his grave.

Augusta. Trotsky spent four years in a rather ugly house on Büyük Ada, the largest of the islands in the Sea of Marmara near Istanbul. It was there that he wrote his major books. That house had belonged to the hatchet man of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, one Izzet Pasha, Arab by origin, and had also been occupied by Gen. Sir Charles Townshend, who was captured in 1916 at Kut el Amara, south of Baghdad. This is stuff for a Stoppard play. Trotsky's first visitor was Georges Simenon, then a leftish journalist from Belgium. Simenon found Trotsky reading Céline, who went on to be the nastiest Nazi propagandist on the Vichy French radio. The surrealism goes on and on. Trotsky paid his way by advances from American publishers and spent his spare time fishing. He discovered a fish, a red creature, with gills vaguely in hammer-and-sickle shape. He called it *Sebastes Leninii*. Stalin, probably handed Trotsky's correspondence by Turkish Intelligence as part of the deal was furious: how could Trotsky, stranded on an island, have surpassed him in this way? He apparently took time off from the geopolitics of the Second War to write an article about said fish in the *Zoologichesky Zhurnal*.

The Lettered Reactionary

John Lukacs is a writer first, a teacher second, a follower never.

By John Rodden and John Rossi

IN LITTLE MORE THAN six months during 1980-81, historian John Lukacs wrote two major essays addressing the future of the Solidarity movement in Poland. The articles proved as prophetic as they were controversial: he argued that the Soviet system was near collapse in Eastern Europe and that communism as an idea was intellectually bankrupt. But what made the pair of pieces particularly intriguing was that they appeared in the leading conservative and liberal journals of the time, *National Review* and *The New Republic*. For those who know John Lukacs, this came as no surprise.

Conservative in temperament, radical in intellect, Lukacs is that rare creature that runs against his fellow intellectuals, the “herd of independent minds” in Harold Rosenberg’s sardonic phrase. He defiantly and gloriously represents an otherwise extinct species: the gadfly as man of letters.

In a career spanning more than 60 years, he ranks among the most prolific scholars writing about modern history. He deals with topics as diverse as World War II, atomic physics and the epistemology of historical knowledge, the rise of American democracy and the accompanying specter of demagogic populism, and—arguably his most important and original domain—the art of historiography and the nature of historical consciousness. He maintains a profound suspicion of the modern world and exhibits immediate allergic reactions to all fads and most conventional wisdom.

The range and diversity of Lukacs’s scholarship partly accounts for his fail-

ure to be properly understood by his intellectual contemporaries or to acquire a school of followers. Nonetheless, his admirers have included some of the keenest minds of 20th-century America: the leftist intellectual historian H. Stuart Hughes, political columnist George Will, cultural historian and social critic Jacques Barzun, and the legendary scholar-diplomat George Kennan. Yet even these distinguished figures have shown patterns of thinking and positioning that lend themselves to definite classification. None has espoused an outlook so idiosyncratic or *Weltanschauung* so singular as to risk incomprehension, dismissal, or mockery. None has adopted stances so rebellious or pursued a path so unorthodox as Lukacs.

He was born into a bourgeois family in Hungary in 1924, son of a Roman Catholic father and a Jewish mother. Raised in the Catholic faith, he nonetheless retained a deep affection for his mother after his parents divorced. She was an Anglophile who ensured that her son learned English and gained an appreciation for British culture. Because of his Jewish background, Lukacs served in a labor battalion in the Hungarian army during World War II. In the spring of 1945, he evaded arrest by the Nazis, but had no doubt about his likely fate at the hands of the Soviet liberators.

At the war’s close, he resumed his studies, and in 1946 he left Hungary for the United States, armed with a Ph.D. in history. He has since taught for almost 50 years at two small Catholic colleges in the Philadelphia area, Chestnut Hill and La

Salle. Asked why he remained at those schools, Lukacs stated, “I didn’t much want to climb the academic stepladder. I wanted a career as a writer.” He believed that teaching undergraduates made his writing more compelling: “I had to explain to undergraduates and describe complicated things simply but not superficially.” Although he was invited to be a visiting professor at top-ranked research universities—Yale, Penn, and the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at Tufts, among others—the “historical profession” and the academic mill exerted no attraction.

When Lukacs arrived in the United States, the Cold War was just beginning. Having witnessed the brutality and inhumanity of the Soviet occupation of his native land, he harbored no illusions about the “noble intentions” of the USSR, unlike many on the American Left. So he was pegged a conservative, though in reality he was never more than a fellow traveler of the Right. True, he has always been a cultural conservative: as the title of his combative 1980 apologia *Confessions of an Original Sinner* suggests, he is a serious Catholic with a commitment to a traditional faith. And although he possesses a temperamental lack of affinity for association with political groups or intellectual circles, he is on cordial terms with paleo-conservatives—particularly the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, with whose press he has published several books.

But much as he scorned the success of communism in winning converts and sympathizers among soft-minded American leftists—he did not doubt, for

example, that Alger Hiss was guilty of treason for political espionage—Lukacs never shared the Right's obsession with anti-communism. He regarded Sen. Joseph McCarthy as an opportunistic thug who represented the crudest, most threatening expression of populist nationalism, a phenomenon that Lukacs considers as the most dangerous trend of the 20th century. He viewed the conservative preoccupation as self-defeating, arguing that communism was ultimately a doomed, outdated 19th-century concept and that the Soviet Union posed no ideological threat to the West. In 1957, in a characteristic barb, he wrote that "except for a few aged Marxists huddled in New York, there are few truly international Communists left."

Indeed, Lukacs trumpeted the argument that the USSR was dangerous because of its military power, not its ideological profile—an idea he advanced as early as 1961 in his *History of the Cold War*, the first time he demonstrated to a large audience the originality of his thinking on a controversial topic. The book profoundly impressed George Kennan, who called it "a really great work of philosophical-historical analysis ... the deepest and most important effort of this sort that has been made anywhere to date."

In Lukacs's 1984 essay "The Problem of American Conservatism," he expanded his critique of the anti-communist Right. "The liberals were senile while the conservatives were immature," he wrote. Some conservatives, determined to regard Lukacs as someone on their side, were quick to respond that immaturity can be outgrown, but there is only one dire end for senility. Yet Lukacs went further. He had a low opinion of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Republican hero of the 1950s. He considered Eisenhower a shallow, superficial president who had lost a golden opportunity to end the Cold War after Stalin's death in March

1953. Eisenhower's rigid anti-communism, he argued, blinded him to an opportunity to pursue détente with Stalin's triumvirate of successors, Malenkov, Molotov, and Khrushchev. Lukacs also looked dimly on the Republican Party of that decade, arguing that after World War II it had promoted and exploited that crude nationalism which he so deplored. He cited a plank from the 1956 Republican Party platform calling for the establishment of military bases around the world.

Lukacs was a fierce critic of the 1960s, though he deviated from the conventional view—shared by Left and Right—of the sixties as the era that reshaped modern American history. He argued instead that the decade should have been seen as continuous with its predecessor: "There is plenty of evidence that the puerility of the 1960s (for that is what it was) existed already in the 1950s: the increasing influence of the pictorial imagination, for instance—especially embodied in television—or in what happened to popular music."

If nothing else, the originality—or sheer orneriness—of such pronouncements gave Lukacs a broader recognition and entry into the mainstream press. His articles began appearing not only in scholarly journals but in such prominent mass-circulation publications as the *New York Times Magazine*, *Horizon*, and *Esquire*. Yet because of his unorthodox opinions and his unwillingness to identify consistently as an adherent to a particular school of thought, Lukacs won no more than a handful of discerning, enthusiastic readers. His audience was limited because of his intellectual temerity and outsider status. This was especially true within the American literary academy and among academic historians, who tended to dismiss his theoretical writings as irrelevant to their craft and to denigrate his narrative histories as "popular" rather than scholarly. This

disregard goes far toward explaining Lukacs's deep disdain for both the American intelligentsia and the historical profession.

From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, both the radicalization of America in response to the Vietnam War and the violence and anti-intellectualism of the student protest movements further complicated Lukacs's political stance. He now castigated the Left as infantile and boorish, just as the Right had been during the McCarthy era. The protest movement and counterculture prompted Lukacs to clarify his political views. Although he wrote extensively for William F. Buckley's *National Review* and R. Emmett Tyrell's *American Spectator* from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, he began at this time to reject, explicitly and vociferously, the label "conservative" and instead started to call himself a "reactionary." In hindsight, it is as if Lukacs adopted the term as a shock tactic: one suspects that "traditionalist" did not strike him as sufficient to irritate the liberal-radical intelligentsia or arresting enough to challenge the secular, modernist pieties of the cultural elite. Confessing to being an "original sinner" in his morals and a "reactionary" in his politics and social views was more likely to hit a contemporary nerve.

This is not to say that he was not serious in describing himself as a "reactionary." It does apply to him, and he meant it to be taken in earnest. The same is true for his self-identification as an "original sinner." (Especially in the sexual sphere, Lukacs does not regard himself as a saint. He was a ladies' man for several decades and is now in his third marriage.) But neither of these terms has lessened the unpredictability of Lukacs's arguments or made him immediately understandable to his audiences. Unlike most reactionaries, he has never revolted against or detested the bourgeoisie. In fact, Lukacs has lived a decidedly middle-

Load up early this Christmas with a stock that—for a change—will retain its value.



Before the Fed vaporizes what's left of your savings, exchange a small share of your paper wealth for a bit of realist, agrarian, Distributist, and Catholic wisdom. Act now to take advantage of an across-the-board 15% savings for *AmCon Mag* readers. Fill out and send the form below, or call or e-mail us... and be sure to mention this ad.

The Outline of Sanity, by G.K. Chesterton
184pp, 6"x9", ISBN 0-9714894-0-8, Item No. GKC001 **\$14.95**

The Free Press, by Hilaire Belloc
96pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9714894-1-6, Item No. HB001 **\$8.95**

Action: A Manual for the Reconstruction of Christendom, by Jean Ousset
272pp, 6"x9", ISBN 0-9714894-2-4, Item No. JO001 **\$16.95**

An Essay on the Restoration of Property, by Hilaire Belloc
104pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9714894-4-0, Item No. HB002 **\$8.95**

Utopia of Usurers, by G.K. Chesterton
136pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9714894-3-2, Item No. GKC002 **\$11.95**

Irish Impressions, by G.K. Chesterton
152pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9714894-5-9, Item No. GKC003 **\$12.95**

The Church and the Land, by Fr. Vincent McNabb
192pp, 6"x9", ISBN 0-9714894-6-7, Item No. VM001 **\$14.95**

Capitalism, Protestantism and Catholicism, by Amintore Fanfani
192pp, 6"x9", ISBN 0-9714894-7-5, Item No. AF001 **\$14.95**

Twelve Types, by G.K. Chesterton
96pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9714894-8-3, Item No. GKC004 **\$8.95**

The Gauntlet: A Challenge to the Myth of Progress, by Arthur J. Penty
96pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9714894-9-1, Item No. AP001 **\$8.95**

Flee to the Fields, the papers of the Catholic Land Movement
160pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9718286-0-1, Item No. FF001 **\$12.95**

An Essay on the Economic Effects of the Reformation, by George O'Brien
160pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9718286-2-8, Item No. GO001 **\$12.95**

Charles I, by Hilaire Belloc
288pp, 6"x9", ISBN 0-9718286-3-6, Item No. HB003 **\$16.95**

Charles II: the Last Rally, by Hilaire Belloc
184pp, 6"x9", ISBN 0-9718286-4-4, Item No. HB004 **\$15.95**

Ethics and the National Economy, by Fr. Heinrich Pesch, S.J.
224pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9718286-5-2, Item No. HP001 **\$13.95**

A Miscellany of Men, by G.K. Chesterton
184pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9718286-1-X, Item No. GKC005 **\$13.95**

Distributist Perspectives, Vol. I, by the chief Distributists
96pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9718286-7-9, Item No. DP001 **\$8.95**

Dollfuss: An Austrian Patriot, by Fr. Johannes Messner
160pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9718286-6-0, Item No. JM001 **\$12.95**

Economics for Helen, by Hilaire Belloc
160pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 1-932528-03-2, Item No. HB006 **\$12.95**

Richelieu, by Hilaire Belloc
272pp, 6"x9", ISBN 0-9718286-8-7, Item No. HB005 **\$16.95**

The Guild State, by G. R. S. Taylor
128pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 1-932528-00-8, Item No. GT001 **\$11.95**

The Party System, by Hilaire Belloc and Cecil Chesterton
160pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 1-932528-11-3, Item No. HB007 **\$12.95**

The Church at the Turning Points of History, by Godfrey Kurth
160pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 1-932528-09-1, Item No. GK001 **\$12.95**

The Rural Solution, by C. McCann, R. Williamson, W. Nutting, et al
102pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-9545632-0-4, Item No. TP001 **\$9.95**

BEYOND Capitalism & Socialism, by T. Lanz, J. Sharpe, K. Sale, et al
240pp, 6"x9", ISBN 1-932528-10-5, Item No. TL001 **\$19.95** (hardback)

Distributist Perspectives, Vol. II, by the chief Distributists
112pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 0-932528-12-1, Item No. DP002 **\$9.95**

The Death of Christian Culture, by John Senior, Ph.D.
192pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 1-932528-15-6, Item No. JS001 **\$18.95** (paper w/ DJ)

The Restoration of Christian Culture, by John Senior, Ph.D.
144pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 1-932528-16-4, Item No. JS002 **\$18.95** (paper w/ DJ)

G.K. Chesterton- A Prophet for the 21st Century, by Aidan Mackey
37pp, 5½"x8½", ISBN 1-932528-53-9, Item No. AM001 **\$4.95**

Neo-CONNED!, by Pat Buchanan, Jude Wanniski, Sam Francis, et al
447pp, 6"x9", ISBN 1-932528-04-0, Item No. NC01P **\$19.95** (paperback)

Neo-CONNED! Again, by Robert Fisk, Robert Hickson, Donn de Grand Pré, et al
897pp, 6"x9", ISBN 1-932528-05-9, Item No. NC02P **\$29.95** (paperback)

QTY	ITEM	PRICE	PLEASE MAIL MY BOOK(S) TO:	
_____	_____	\$ _____	Name: _____	_____
_____	_____	\$ _____	Address: _____	_____
_____	_____	\$ _____	City: _____	State: _____ Zip: _____
_____	_____	\$ _____	SUBTOTAL \$ _____ LESS 15% (\$ _____)	
_____	_____	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed* for the TOTAL \$ _____	
_____	_____	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bill my VISA/Master/Discover/AmEx Card:	
_____	_____	\$ _____	CARD NO. _____	EXP. DATE _____
_____	_____	\$ _____	SIGNATURE _____	PHONE _____
_____	_____	\$ _____	<div style="float: right; text-align: right;"> phone/fax: 877.IHS.PRES (447.7737) internet: www.ihspress.com e-mail: order@ihspress.com mail: IHS Press 222 W. 21st St., Suite F-122 Norfolk, VA 23517 USA </div>	
Shipping & Handling: \$ _____				

\$4.50 FOR THE 1ST BOOK/\$1.50 EA. ADD'L.
ADD \$4.00 PER PKG. FOR PRIORITY MAIL

* Make checks payable to "IHS Press"

class life in an older suburb of Philadelphia, where he has served on his neighborhood-planning association for 30 years, waging a long battle against commercial overdevelopment.

The 1980s saw Lukacs drift further away from the mainstream Right. His antagonism toward American conservatives intensified as their political fortunes prospered in the late 1970s, reaching a peak with the election of their standard-bearer, Ronald Reagan, as president in 1980. Lukacs had voted for Reagan largely out of disgust with what he called the “pusillanimities of Jimmy Carter.” But Reagan soon became his *bête noire*, someone who represented everything wrong with American conservatism. He called him “superficial, lazy, puerile . . . an expansive nationalist,” the product of shrewd public relations. Here was a Hollywood B-list actor turned commander in chief, a nightmarish fulfillment of the Peter Principle of ever-ascending, maximized incompetence. For Lukacs, Reagan represented the triumph of American demagogic populism: the specter he had warned against for decades turned into reality in the deceptively benign, quintessentially American form of the General Electric host and genial “aw-schucks” California cowboy.

What exercised Lukacs above all was Reagan’s simplistic view of the world—as if it were a Hollywood studio set from an earlier era, with the subtleties of international geopolitics reduced to good guys wearing white hats battling bad guys in black hats. When Reagan was credited in the 1990s by conservatives—and much of the mainstream press—with bringing about the fall of communism, Lukacs would have none of it. In 1988, on the eve of the collapse of Berlin Wall, he stated, “I, an early anti-Communist, have more sympathy, respect and goodwill for Mikhail Gorbachev than for Ronald Reagan.” Instead, he attributed the defeat of com-

munism to the courage of the peoples of Eastern Europe, particularly the Poles and Hungarians, along with the dramatic role of Lukacs’s sole contemporary hero, Pope John Paul II.

At the same time, a note of pessimism about the future of the West in general and the United States in particular crept into Lukacs’s writings. The passive reaction to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 had initially led him to wonder if Western civilization was decaying. In later years—in the wake of the West’s tepid response to Czechoslovakia’s Prague Spring in 1968 and Poland’s Solidarity movement in the early 1980s—Lukacs concluded that the West had lost confidence in its own culture, a phenomenon that worsened as the decades passed. By the mid-1990s, his doomsaying cultural pronouncements resembled those of another communist refugee on America’s shores, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Not unlike Solzhenitsyn, Lukacs argued both in *Outgrowing Democracy: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century* (1984) and *The End of the Twentieth Century and the End of the Modern Age* (1993) that the West had lost its dynamism, been corrupted by materialism, and that the United States had fallen hostage to an elective monarchy debased by public relations and political polling.

Still undimmed in his mid 80s, Lukacs maintains his impressive literary output. Since the 1990s, he has published significant works on Philadelphia, on Budapest in 1900, on Winston Churchill’s rivalry with Hitler, and on the career of George Kennan—along with two volumes of autobiography and an unorthodox amalgam of history and fiction, *A Thread of Years*. The latter book is perhaps the most original work of Lukacs’s enormous oeuvre. His amazing vitality has been indispensable to his independence and feeling of invulnerability. Strong-willed and forceful, Lukacs

is ideally suited to the life of the freelance writer, the independent intellectual, the voice in the wilderness.

He is convivial and quite sociable—a loyal friend, as intellectuals who differed with him, such as Dwight Macdonald, have discovered to their joy. But he can be a difficult man to deal with: getting his own way is important to him, even at the cost of intellectual influence or financial gain. Lukacs’s assertiveness predisposes him to conflict and strife. He can fall prey to a tendency to “bite the hand that feeds him” and perceive fatal slights and divergences of outlook that may in reality not exist at all.

His background as a survivor of Hitlerism and Stalinism informs these attitudes: he is a survivor above all. He has experienced the world in terms of struggle and endurance; he has continuously tested his mettle against the political environment—and prevailed. Because this mode of expression has led to such favorable results in terms of his productivity and ability to thrive independently, he has developed a steely self-determination. Once his ego fuses with an idea, he can readily bring that vision to life, presenting it convincingly and with dramatic power.

Lukacs’s confidence in his gifts extends to the conviction that he can and will emerge victorious in the end. Even if his literary and intellectual achievements are undervalued by the present generation of scholars, posterity will vindicate him. That orientation fits perfectly with his reactionary outlook: his love of the past as a historian and his trust in the future as a Catholic believer. ■

John Rodden is the author of The Politics of Literary Reputation, among other books. John Rossi is professor emeritus of history at La Salle University in Philadelphia. Both were students of John Lukacs.

Scholar Among Rakes

Macaulay communes across the generations.

By R.J. Stove

MACAULAY—or, to give him his full name and peerage, Thomas Babington Macaulay, first Baron Macaulay—died a century and a half ago. No historian has aroused a greater range of emotions, from deep love to wild hate. The deep love became evident in his own day, when his *History of England* and his numerous essay collections achieved a commercial success now associated with supermarket tabloids and Oprah-endorsed chick-lit. He was evidently well-liked by both of his chief biographers, namely, his nephew G.O. Trevelyan, whose *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* appeared in 1876, and his spiritual heir Sir Arthur Bryant, whose admiring, though intermittently censorious, single-volume *Macaulay* dates from 1932. Throughout the former British Empire, schoolteachers long accorded Macaulay's name a reverence that is today confined to Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela. Even Ignatius Reilly, the ferociously anti-Protestant hero of John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*, quotes with approval the Protestant Macaulay.

This firm admiration exists alongside equally firm detraction. After Macaulay's death, Matthew Arnold, never one to stand idly by when there was a mindless slogan in need of publicizing or a literary reputation impudent enough to arise without his help, called Macaulay "the great apostle of the Philistines." In 1931, Sir Herbert Butterfield, who differed from Arnold in having a genuine philosophical impulse, devoted his renowned pamphlet *The Whig Interpretation of History* to criticizing triumphalist histor-

ical narratives in general, and by implication Macaulay's own. Yet Butterfield always paid Macaulay's outlook the compliment of serious argument. Very different was the personal vendetta waged against Macaulay in the same decade by Winston Churchill, who seethed at Macaulay's refusal to deify Churchill's forebear the Duke of Marlborough. Churchill taxed Macaulay with having "vilified Marlborough's early life in order by contrast to make the glories of his great period stand out more vividly." Ancestor worship is no doubt an honorable impulse, but in writing *Marlborough: His Life and Times* (1933-1938), Churchill had no compunction about serving up a cartoon historiography far more objectionably strident than anything ever perpetrated by his intended target. Reviewers were inconsiderate enough to point out Churchill's reckless agenda. (No such scruples afflicted America's Churchill cultists: Leo Strauss, whose own knowledge of English politics in the late Stuart era could have fit on the back of a postage stamp, dubbed Churchill's filial agitprop "the greatest historical work written in our century.") Yet such half-baked invective as Arnold's and Churchill's prompts the question: will the real Macaulay please stand up?

The real Macaulay's career consisted of broadly disinterested public service and little else. Born in 1800, he never married. If he had a love life or even a lust life, he kept it dark. Bryant refers scornfully to debunkers "seeking ... evidence of sexual perversities and scandals, rather as little dogs seek out truffles." Yet one doubts if any canine,

however industrious, could dig up vices that would incriminate Macaulay. Young Tom loved words as few children do. When but 4 years old, having been scalded by spilt coffee, he responded to his hostess's concern: "Thank you, madam, the agony is abated." He was not likely to be tongue-tied as an adult. From his redoubtable father, Zachary Macaulay—statistician, veteran anti-slavery activist, and erstwhile governor of Sierra Leone—he inherited evangelical fervor, an exalted conception of duty, and at the same time an 18th-century tough-mindedness that precluded such vague pious uplift as Woodrow Wilson subsequently taught the world.

No other writer in the English pantheon has surpassed Macaulay for sheer learning. Milton alone came close. Macaulay knew firsthand all the surviving productions of the leading Greek and Roman authors and felt bound to study them in the original languages. He also knew every major French author, contemporary or ancient. Later, he acquired enough German to read Goethe and Schiller. On the Elizabethans and their Italian contemporaries, he had wider expertise still. When he said that Milton's masque *Comus* "is as far superior to *The Faithful Shepherdess* as *The Faithful Shepherdess* is to the *Aminta* or the *Aminta* to the *Pastor Fido*," he assumed readers would recall these three works as having been created by, respectively, John Fletcher (1579-1625), Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), and Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538-1612).

Within Macaulay's lexicon, "dumbing down" existed neither as phrase nor concept. "Every schoolboy," ran one of his more sanguine pronouncements, "knows who imprisoned Montezuma and who strangled Atahualpa." Every schoolboy at Beverly Hills 90210, one wonders? Every schoolboy even in Macaulay's lifetime, when many schools' curricula comprised no more

than elementary spelling, arithmetic, and Bible classes, punctuated by near homicidal floggings?

That said, Macaulay never lacked readers in his day. Publishers ate up his output, even as they privately felt alarm at the authoritative exuberance of his prose. One of his very first patrons, the *Edinburgh Review*'s editor Francis Jeffrey, marveled, "The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style."

In Macaulay's Britain, libel legislation had yet to be passed, and dueling had grown unfashionable. Thus warfare between periodicals attained an *ad hominem* belligerence that would never again be witnessed among Anglophones until a hundred years later, when the Moscow show trials goaded New York Jewish intellectuals into their reciprocal head-kicking sessions. Macaulay's opponents, when in benign mood, contented themselves with misspelling "Babington" as "Babbletongue." Harsher and more typical was the ultra-Tory magazine *Blackwood's*, which in its October 1827 issue expressed for Macaulay the loftiest contempt: "We scarcely ever met with a more striking specimen of frothy, shallow, pointless feeble declamation—of puerile, low, scurrilous 'sound and fury, signifying nothing'." (When Wordsworth died, *Blackwood's* obituary notice called him "a fat ugly cur.") If we sometimes regret the way Macaulay dished it out, we should remember that he also had to take it.

Perhaps the zenith of Macaulay's dish-ing-out propensities came with his onslaught on J.W. Croker, a Tory boss whose declension from moderately talented scholar to party-political goon—bungling party-political goon, at that—anticipates with eerie perfection the metamorphosis of some academics of our own time. Croker ill-advisedly released, in 1831, a new edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, with annota-

tions as lavish as they were inaccurate. Macaulay let him have it from the opening sentence:

This work has greatly disappointed us. ... We are sorry to be obliged to say that the merits of Mr. Croker's performance are on a par with those of a certain leg of mutton on which Dr. Johnson dined, while travelling from London to Oxford, and which he, with characteristic energy, pronounced to be 'as bad as bad could be, ill fed, ill killed, ill kept, and ill dressed.' This edition is ill compiled, ill arranged, ill written, and ill printed. Nothing in the work has astonished us so much as the ignorance or carelessness of Mr. Croker with respect to facts and dates. Many of his blunders are such as we should be surprised to hear any well educated gentleman commit, even in conversation. The tomes absolutely swarm with mis-statements into which the editor never would have fallen, if he had taken the slightest pains to investigate the truth of his assertions, or if he had even been well acquainted with the book on which he undertook to comment. We will give a few instances.

And give them Macaulay does, on subjects as diverse as Juvenal, Thucydides, Suetonius, Herodotus, Demosthenes, the 17th-century Scottish Royalist general Montrose, and the correct translation of the Greek term *philok-erdes*.

One might wonder what the polymathic Macaulay did when not reading or writing. The answer is not a lot. His tenure as parliamentarian, and later as minister—he held cabinet rank in the governments of two Whig prime ministers, Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell—allowed him expansive leisure for his studies, politics being then con-

sidered a hobby for gentlemen rather than a full-time job. Though no debater, he gained bipartisan respect as an orator. Future Tory Premier Sir Robert Peel commented after one Macaulay address, "Portions of that speech were as beautiful as anything I ever heard or read."

In 1835, crushed by the death of his sister Margaret, Macaulay wrote to his closest friend, Thomas Ellis, "What a blessing it is to love books as I love them—to be able to converse with the dead, and to live amidst the unreal." Not the kind of sentiment to be heard from the lips of modern policy wonks. Eventually, however, even his undemanding administrative duties came to annoy him; in his last years, worn down by cardiac trouble, he would have endorsed the sentiments that Evelyn Waugh confided to his diary in 1943: "I ... don't want to influence opinions or events, or expose humbug or anything of that kind. I don't want to be of service to anyone or anything. I simply want to do my work as an artist."

Of course, Macaulay the artist had his flaws. He did not have the opportunities for archival research that exist in today's world. These days, any teenage halfwit with Google access can trawl through more 17th-century primary sources in an hour than Macaulay could have obtained in a decade. To cite Bryant:

At the time when Macaulay was working, English historical scholarship was at its lowest ebb. Those who blame him for his neglect of documents might as justly censure Napoleon for failing to use machine-guns at Waterloo. ... Of technical training for his task he had scarcely any, for there was then scarcely any to be had.

The miracle is not that Macaulay made mistakes, or that he glorified King William III with a zest incredible to us

Give **The American Conservative** this Christmas

Looking for a unique gift that lasts throughout the year? Give a subscription to **The American Conservative**, a magazine that challenges the prevailing orthodoxy of the political establishment and forcefully makes the case for our Republic's founding principles.

You can give a full year's subscription (12 issues) to the first person on your gift list for just \$29, a whopping \$20.97 saving off our basic subscription price. Then pay only \$24 for additional Christmas gifts. (You can also use this special opportunity to renew your own subscription at these same record-low rates!)

Just fill out and mail the form below. Or place your gift order immediately by calling us toll-free at **1-800-579-6148** or visiting **www.amconmag.com**.

My name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Here are the names of friends I would like to present with a Christmas gift subscription to **The American Conservative**:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Sign gift card from: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Sign gift card from: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Sign gift card from: _____

☐ Please include my own subscription renewal.

☐ Bill me.

☐ I am paying by check (\$29 for the first one-year/24-issue gift subscription, \$24 for each additional gift), payable to **The American Conservative**.

☐ I prefer to pay with my credit card. Charge my:



Account No.: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

The American Conservative

Subscription Dept. • P.O. Box 9030 • Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

today who know more about William's political corruption and erotic perversions than Macaulay ever knew or we ever wanted to know. Rather, it is that despite his weaknesses, Macaulay remains compulsively readable and at times profound. His summary of the historian's function packs as much wisdom into one sentence as others have dragged out over several dozen pages:

The real use of ... studying the annals of past times, is to preserve men from the contraction of mind which those can hardly escape whose sole communion is with one generation and one neighborhood, who arrive at conclusions by means of an induction not sufficiently copious, and who therefore constantly confound exceptions with rules, and accidents with essential properties.

For all his biases, Macaulay sought the truth. No wonder Churchill resented him. A thinker who risked ostracism by rebuking Queen Victoria to her face—when Her Majesty referred to her “ancestor” James II, Macaulay shot back: “Not Your Majesty’s ancestor, Your Majesty’s predecessor”—would hardly have taken the 20th century’s blood-drenched Caesars at their own ethical rating had he lived to witness them.

Before he could finish his *History of England*, Macaulay died on Dec. 28, 1859. No latter-day chronicler can hope to equal the exquisite closing paragraph of Bryant’s biography:

They found him sitting upright in his chair, with a book still open at his side. The heart had stopped, and the historian had become part of that which he had made it his business to record. ■

R.J. Stove lives in Melbourne, Australia.

[*Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford’s Forgotten Jungle City* by Greg Grandin]

Burning Rubber

Henry Ford’s jungle book

By Septimus Waugh

IN AN INTERVIEW with the *Texas Observer* in 2006, Greg Grandin complained, “History is abused in all sorts of ways by those who want to reduce every issue or conflict to its barest emotional simplicity in order to justify American power in the world.” He was, of course, referring to the neocons and their antics in South America and the Middle East. Grandin has been a longstanding critic in books such as *Empire’s Workshop* and *The Last Colonial Massacre*, as well as in his work for the UN Truth Commission on the Guatemalan civil war.

One might think that he would turn from such grim topics with a light heart to the description of Henry Ford’s failed attempt to bring civilization to the Amazon in exchange for rubber. And he has, to a degree. *Fordlandia*, his account of the doomed founding of two Ford towns in Brazil, is written with a flair and deftness that one might expect to find in a well-crafted novel, yet a darker theme prevails.

The story starts with that favorite Hollywood villain: the Englishman. In 1876, Henry Wickham, a ne’er-do-well British wanderer, smuggled 70,000 Hevea seeds from the Amazon to Kew Gardens, a service for which he received a knighthood from Queen Victoria. Hevea, the tree that produces latex, is native only to the Amazon. As the industrialized world’s appetite for rubber rocketed in the second half of the 19th century, the

Amazon experienced a latex-led boom. Rubber profits turned Manaus into a center of culture. But this did not last because latex grown in the jungle could only be sourced—“tapped” is the phrase—inefficiently, whereas the wicked British with their stolen seeds were able to grow Hevea on great plantations in their Far Eastern colonies. By 1923, the rubber production of the British Empire had outstripped that of the Amazon by a factor of almost ten.

This is where Henry Ford, with his ideals and his prejudices, comes in. There does not seem to have been much to Ford except work and more work before he founded his Ford Company in 1903. Then he started to voice his home-spun philosophy: cars would end conflicts because people would travel and get to understand each other. “Happiness is on the road,” he said, chorusing Mr. Toad. “I am on the road, and I am happy.”

Ford reached the peak of his powers in his fifties, when he invented the production line and standardized the parts of the Model T, driving down the price of automobile production. He raised his workers’ wage to a minimum of \$5 a day, enabling them to buy the cars they produced.

With Ford’s success came a certain hubris: he hired an ocean liner to travel to Europe on a mission to convince the British and German empires that they

should desist from war. They did not listen. At this stage of his life, Ford's opinions would not sound out of place in contemporary America. He was a suffragist and a pacifist and also a keen recycler. (Even the boats that took the first cargoes to Fordlandia were converted from scrapped vessels.) Ford hated government and banks, which he blamed for promoting war and empire.

So when it came to his attention that the rubber trade was not only dominated by British estates in the Far East but that colonial merchants had supplanted the

because they produced only milk; he preferred soybeans that could be used for making plastic as well. "The cow is the crudest machine in the world," he said. "Our laboratories have already demonstrated that cow's milk can be done away with and the concentration of the elements of milk can be manufactured into food by scientific machines far cleaner than cows." Above all, Ford was shocked to discover that while in the U.S. high wages ensured attendance at work, in the Amazon they encouraged absenteeism.

FORD HAD HOPED THAT THE AMAZONIAN NATIVES WOULD LEARN SQUARE DANCING IN EVENING SESSIONS AT THE TOWN HALL.

Amazon rubber trade, Ford saw a chance to put his ideas into practice. He would create a civilized rubber-producing settlement in Brazil, complete with American-style bungalows, street lighting, and a hospital. An area of forest would be cleared, the timber put to good use, and a large Hevea-producing region would be planted. The Ford Company would offer the Amazonian rubber tappers proper wages and inculcate them with the values of small-town America. "In his more utopian moments," says Grandin, "he envisioned a world in which industry and agriculture could exist in harmony with factories providing seasonal labor for farmers and industrial markets for agricultural products like soybeans."

None of it worked. The tappers' way of life proved incompatible with Fordism. They only tapped part-time and chose to practice animal husbandry. They did not want to give up their homesteads for full-time employment. But the Ford organization, while it encouraged horticulture among its workers, did not like the messy nature of small-scale livestock rearing. Ford abhorred cows

So the Ford Company abandoned its ideals and imported labor from the West Indies and elsewhere. But these workers brought their own problems: prostitution, gonorrhea, and loose dancing—the samba to be precise. Ford had hoped that the Amazonian natives would learn square dancing in evening sessions at the town hall.

The problems presented by the work force were as nothing compared to the difficulties created by the trees. Hevea thrived in large plantations in the Far East, where there were no pests or fungi. In the Amazon, these indigenous diseases, which had kept Hevea growth in check in the wild, ran riot when the trees were concentrated in plantations. Nine years after the founding of Fordlandia, the Ford Company, defeated by the terrain and the damp, moved its rubber-growing project to Belterra, where the land was drier and flatter. Yet even here the rubber project was not successful enough to warrant continuance. In 1945, after another nine years, Ford gave up the project completely and handed both Fordlandia and Belterra to the Brazilian government.

The most baffling element in this story is that such a foolish and appalling man as Ford could have founded a hugely successful industry and inspired so much loyalty among his workers. In Brazil, he was dubbed the "Jesus of Industry." In the U.S., he was likened by his employees to a Moses leading them toward the Promised Land. Yet Ford was quite clearly a destructive character: he subscribed wholeheartedly to the ideas expressed in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and had an intensely vindictive relationship with his son Edsel.

In his descriptions of Ford operatives wrestling with Amazonian and Brazilian society, Grandin conveys immediacy and excitement. With a light ironic touch, he brings to life the rogues and cranks who animate his tale. But beneath his history of Ford's adventures in the jungle and the recounting of the tycoon tyrant's dreams and caprices, readers will discern an undercurrent of criticism for globalized capitalism and for the part that the U.S. has played in its development. This theme emerges more distinctly in an excellent last chapter, which ties the threads together. "Even as Ford was preaching his gospel of 'high wages to create large markets,'" as Grandin puts it, "Fordism as an industrial method was making the balanced, whole world Ford longed for impossible to achieve. Today the link between production and consumption, and between good pay and big markets, has been broken, invalidated by the global extension of the logic of the assembly line." For Grandin, the world is a much worse place now than it was in Henry Ford's times—a view that will be shared by many readers. For we are all Fordlandians now. ■

Septimus Waugh is a carpenter and wood-carver living in Devon, England. His website is www.septimuswaugh.co.uk.

Friendly Ghosts

Ours is an October house, shrouded by spreading maples. Its creaky floorboards of pine and chestnut were hewn in the 1830s, as Upstate New York was

ablaze with the religious and reform manias through which we earned the appellation of the “Burned-Over District.” Ancient spiderwebs lattice the basement. (I really should knock them down, but then where would the ancient spiders live?) The previous owner, a willowy eccentric, assured us that “pixies and fairies frolic in the garden,” but aside from a few house guests, I’ve yet to see that. Nor have I seen a ghost, even though for nigh unto a century our county’s leading spiritualists called this their earthly home.

When we moved in 17 autumns ago, my wife and I read aloud *Dracula*. The only other auditor was our lab-mutt puppy, who, thus forewarned, never did become a biter. (When our infant daughter came home from the hospital two winters later, I walked her to sleep to Cormac McCarthy’s *All the Pretty Horses*. Okay, so it’s not *Goodnight, Moon*, but at least it ain’t *Blood Meridian*.)

My parents order the same breakfasts at the same diners on the same days every single week, and I suppose I have inherited this orderliness in my seasonal reading habits. Come October, I take the same old friends off the bookshelf. I could no more grow tired of them than I could be bored by the resplendent reds and oranges of an Upstate fall.

First up is always Stephen Vincent Benet’s *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, in which the Godlike Dan’l defends a New Hampshireman who has sold his soul to Scratch. (No, it wasn’t David Souter.) As my daughter and I read it

this year, I thought about Webster, re-elected to Congress in 1814 on the “American Peace Ticket”—a name reeking of treason in our 21st-century America of perpetual war. William Dieterle made a superb film of Benet’s story, but why has no movie ever been made of Webster’s gargantuan life?

We read Poe, of course, and after the House of Usher collapses into the tarn, I eye the fissure in our foundation with a certain foreboding. Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” with its sumptuous description of a Dutch repast, confirms my taste for oly koeks (whatever they are) over Little Debbies. Next up is Nathaniel Hawthorne’s allegory “Young Goodman Brown,” in which a Salem Puritan finds—or does he?—that “There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given.” The Cheney family motto, I’ll bet.

Hawthorne wrote a campaign biography of his old Bowdoin College classmate Franklin Pierce, whom he judged “deep, deep, deep.” Why has no American novelist written about the strange yet fortifying friendship of Hawthorne and Pierce? We’ve such a fantastically rich history, yet men drain away their days watching the living dead wrestle animated corpses on MSNBC and Fox.

I had approached Russell Kirk’s ghost stories with dread, fearing that on the scare-meter they’d register even lower than the supernatural tales (*Turn of the Screw* aside) of Henry James, in which, at most, a spinster’s petticoats are rus-

tled by a draft. Yet Kirk’s ghostly tales, collected in *Ancestral Shadows*, cast a spell. I annually read “Saviourgate,” in which a harried man has a restorative whiskey and chat at a small hotel on the borderland between this world and the next; and “An Encounter by Mortstone Pond,” wherein a used-up man meets and emboldens his younger sorrowful self. There is, in Kirk’s diction and pace, a fustiness which in other writers might seem an affectation, but hey, who am I to complain about stylistic idiosyncrasies?

Here’s another book that ought to be: *Ghost Stories by Reactionaries*. To the finest of Kirk and James add tales (from *Black Spirits and White*) by the architect Ralph Adams Cram, who designed that most Octoberish of campuses, the Hudson River Gothic West Point. And throw in H.P. Lovecraft, upon whose headstone is incised one of my favorite epitaphs: “I AM PROVIDENCE.”

Forget the Old Ones. The horrors of Cthulhu pale before this Lovecraft observation:

A man belongs where he has roots—where the landscape and milieu have some relation to his thoughts and feelings, by virtue of having formed them. A real civilization recognizes this fact—and the circumstance that America is beginning to forget it, does far more than does the mere matter of commonplace thought and bourgeois inhibitions to convince me that the general American fabric is becoming less and less a true civilization and more and more a vast, mechanical, and emotionally immature barbarism de luxe.

Now *that* is terrifying. ■

With a foreword by *New York Times* bestselling author Christopher Buckley

An extraordinary and sweeping memoir of one of the most revered families in America— THE BUCKLEYS

A family whose ideals would go on to shape the traditionalist revival, the Buckleys are synonymous with a unique brand of conservatism—marked by merciless reasoning, wit, good humor, and strong will.

With charm and candor, youngest son Reid tells the enormously engaging and entertaining—and sometimes unbelievable—story of the family that became the mainstay of right-wing belief in our politics and culture.

“This book is substantially about the world my grandfather created for his children and other descendants. He was by any measure remarkable, and though I knew a great deal about him before picking up Reid’s book, I didn’t know the half of it.”

—FROM THE FOREWORD
BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

AN AMERICAN FAMILY THE BUCKLEYS



“A great rumbustious grab bag of history, anecdotes, and pinpoint descriptions of people and their attire, landscapes, dogs, horses, houses, guns, and railroad cars.”

—*National Review*

REID BUCKLEY

With a foreword by *New York Times* bestselling author
CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY



www.simonandschuster.com

eBook edition also available.

"State Nullification, Secession, and the Human Scale of Political Order"

Charleston, South Carolina, February 4 -7, 2010



Registration:

Place: The Francis Marion Hotel at the low conference rate of \$129 per night (double or single) **while they last**. For reservations call the Hotel at (843) 722-0600.

Conference Fee: includes lectures, breakfast, luncheon reception at the Washington Light Infantry Armory, two finger food suppers, the banquet, and transportation to view items rarely seen: South Carolina ordinance of secession, the original secession flag, the secession banner, and much more: \$350 if received by **November 15**; \$400 thereafter. **Commuter:** lectures only—\$200; with banquet \$260.

Scholarships: a limited number for full time college or graduate students. **To Register:** (and for more about the lectures) visit www.abbeyvilleinstitute.org. For all other questions call (404) 377-0484 or email the Institute at: abbeyvilleinst@bellsouth.net.

George Kennan, author of the Cold War policy to contain the Soviet Union and described by some as the "conscience of America," taught that a regime can be dysfunctional by simply becoming *too large*. Near the end of a long career in service to his country, he thought the American regime had grown too large for self government and that we should begin a public debate on how to divide it in the direction of a more human scale.

Today, for the first time in 144 years, State nullification and secession have entered public discourse. The Founders considered nullification and secession as remedies to unconstitutional acts of the central government. The aim of the conference is to recover this neglected part of the American constitutional tradition and to explore its intimations for today.

Lecturers:

- **Kent Masterson Brown**, Historian and Constitutional Lawyer
- **Marshall DeRosa**, Political Science, Florida Atlantic University
- **Thomas DiLorenzo**, Economics, Loyola University, Maryland
- **Peter Jones**, Former Director, The Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh, and Fellow, Royal Society of Edinburgh
- **Yuri Maltsev**, Economics, Carthage College and former advisor to Gorbachev's government on *perestroika*
- **Donald Livingston**, Philosophy, Emory University
- **Thomas Naylor**, Founder, The Second Vermont Republic
- **Lawrence W. Reed**, President, Foundation for Economic Education
- **Kirkpatrick Sale**, Director of The Middlebury Institute
- **Kyle Scott**, Political Science, University of Houston
- **Clyde Wilson**, History, University of South Carolina

Visit Historic Charleston:

The conference Hotel is within walking distance of the graceful historic section. The conference rate applies for days immediately before and after the conference. Boat tours to Fort Sumter leave from Liberty Square, a short walk from the hotel. See www.fortsumtourtours.com.



The Nullification House